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THE ONE WHO WAS LEFT BEHIND

by

ELSA DICKMAN GIPPO



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IN MEMORY OF MY FATHER AND TWO BROTHERS

Meier Dickman,

Born Fifte Lichtel, 1881,

My Father

(The fifth light of Hanuka)

Arrested October 27, 1942

Deported November 26, 1942 on Donau

Died Auschwitz December 1, 1942

Herman Dickman

Born February 28, 1910

My Oldest Brother

Arrested October 27, 1942

Deported November 26, 1942 on Donau

Died Auschwitz January 16, 1943

Sigurd Dickman

My Youngest Brother

Born November 9, 1915

Arrested October 27, 1942

Deported November 26, 1942 on Donau

Died Auschwitz February 15, 1943

PROLOGUE

Whenever I told my family a story from my past, my son invariably said: "You should write it down". Then my grandson, Jesse, started telling me the same thing. When he joined the Navy and was sent to the Persian Gulf in 1990 just before the war, I began writing him letters. There is just so much one can tell daily from a fairly sedate life, and to keep him interested enough to read my letters, I started to write him stories from my past. He always wanted to know more, and that is how this book got started. I thank him and the rest of my family for their interest and belief in me: Jan, my son; Kiva, my other grandson; and last but not least my husband for over 57 years, Kris.

The names of the resistance workers are not their real names. A few other names have also been changed in regard to their remaining families.

A special thought goes to my now deceased brother, Rolle. I saw him often and talked to him every week for over 40 years. He was a prince, a great human being, the finest husband, a beloved father and grandfather, and as a brother, the best.

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BROCKEN

EPILOGUE

BOOK ONE

THE ESCAPE

March 2, 1990

Dear Jesse,

When I talked to you yesterday, you sounded sincere about wanting to know about my experiences in my home country of Norway during World War II, and I decided it was time to write it all down. This letter will be the beginning of my story. There is much to tell, and it's hard to know where to start. I will begin with the day the Germans arrested all the Jewish men in Norway, October 27 1942.

The Germans had occupied Norway the ninth of April, 1940, and since then everybody had felt uneasy, especially the Jews. We all knew only too well what had happened to the Jews in Germany during Hitler's regime, and rumours were our daily news. We never knew exactly what and when things were happening, but we did know that something would happen.

A few days before October 27th two Jewish boys had been arrested while trying to escape to Sweden, and ever since the air had been filled with electricity. The young boys had been discovered on the train with one of the resistance fighters - "The Underground" we called them - and one policeman had been shot. Who had shot him was unclear, but we all knew that the Jews would be blamed. My brothers came home that night, and it

was the first time I heard Papa say that he wished we could all go to Sweden. We could only look at each other and shrug. It was too late to lament now. We decided that it would be best if the men stayed with non-Jewish friends from now on. Papa stayed home until the night of the 26h because he had no Gentile friends. I don't know where he went that night, but the rumors were so thick that we knew it would be too dangerous for him to stay home.

That night was the last time I saw my father.

Because I didn't know what else to do, I went to work the next morning. We lived in the city of Oslo, and I worked in an electrical firm located about twenty minutes away with street car or bicycle. It took a little longer when I walked, which I did often. This day I took the street car. From the moment I came into the office, I knew something terrible had happened. My co-workers did not expect to see me at all and were surprised that I had shown up for work. They told me that all the Jewish men had been arrested. I called my brother, Rolle. In a tired voice he answered the phone.

"Have you heard anything?", I asked.

He had difficulties talking, but told me in a quiet voice that my oldest brother, Herman, my youngest brother, Sigurd, and

our father had already been arrested and taken away. Papa had slept in the office at Rolle's tailor shop when the police came to arrest Rolle, and had arrested both of them. The two policemen were human enough to give Rolle an hour to take care of his business before they took him away, but they weren't human enough to leave my elderly father behind. Herman and Sigurd had both been arrested at work.

"But don't worry about Papa," Rolle said. "They don't keep the older men." From where he got the notion that older men were safe, I don't know, but I believed him. "I am coming right over," I said. "I might not be here," he mumbled.

I don't remember how I got to his shop. Rolle was still there. Everything looked normal, and for a fleeting moment I thought that they might spare him. I always hoped. For years I hoped. Even when I knew that it was all over, I hoped.

You might ask why Rolle didn't try to escape when he had the chance. And the answer is simple. If someone was under observation and disappeared, reprisals were taken on the family. Rolle was thinking of his wife and me. Nusse was in the hospital, flat on her back with a difficult pregnancy, trying to save her baby, and I was still free. He also expected that Papa and the others would be shot, should he disappear.

Rolle wanted me to leave before the Quislings came for him. He asked me to look after Nusse, and I nodded. He also told me to get warm underwear for all of them. October in Norway is a cold month, and the Quislings hadn't allowed anybody to go home to get any change of clothing. I promised I would do what I could. He was very anxious for me to go, and we hugged each other. I held on to him until he had to gently free himself. I didn't cry - my insides felt frozen.

I walked the streets aimlessly. I met Petter, the best non-Jewish friend Herman and Rolle had. He knew what had happened, and asked me what I was going to do.

"I don't know," I said. "Will you come home with me?"

He excused himself. He said he had an appointment and hurried along. I accepted his refusal then, took it for granted that he wouldn't want to go to a Jewish home where all the men had just been arrested. But years later I realized that he had failed me. He shouldn't have let me go home alone that day. He should have done something for me, maybe at least bought me a cup of coffee. I mentioned it to Rolle 40 years later, after Petter had died. Rolle excused his friend:

"So many people were afraid during the war, we might have done the same thing if we were put on the spot."

And who knows? I should hope I would do better in a situation like that.

Petter came around later that day when he discovered that there was no danger at the moment. I accepted that too, and was glad to see him.

Well, Jess, this is all I can write at the moment. You are very precious to me.

Love Grandma

March 22, 1990

Dear Jesse,

I walked the streets several hours after I met Petter, with only one thought in my head: "They are not going to break me, they are not going to break me," before I finally found courage enough to go home. I hesitated prior to entering the apartment building, then ran up the four flights of stairs, hesitated again before I opened the door and walked in. The entrance hall looked deserted - like nobody lived there - indeed, did I still live there? I went into the living room and sat down on the sofa. The house seemed so quiet, as it had the evening Mama died, and fleetingly the thought slipped through my mind what a good thing it was that she was no longer living.

I saw some papers on the dining room table and got up to look at them. One was a "Warrant of Arrest" for me. It also stated that all our property had been confiscated, and that I was to report to the nearest police station every day. There was a note from Herman telling me that the Nazis were there waiting to take him and Papa away. Besides the note was a heap of silver "kroner," I couldn't understand why the Nazis had accompanied him home again, since he had been arrested at work. My understanding was that those arrested were not allowed to

take anything with them. Papa had been arrested at Rolle's - had he been home too? I saw no signs of him having been there, although the note implied he had. Had Herman been allowed to go home to leave me a note? And Papa? What had happened to him? Why was he separated from his sons? I had so many unanswered questions and still have. I never knew exactly what happened to them that day. The note only said that the silver coins were all the money he had for me. "Goodbye," Herman wrote.

It was a true goodbye, because I never saw him again. Not him, nor Papa, nor Sigurd. They just vanished. One day they were here - then they were not. It didn't seem real.

But the silver "kroner" were real. And the letter from the Nazi Police Department was real. It was no nightmare, it was happening.

Evening came, and still I sat in the chair by the table looking at the note and the silver coins until finally the doorbell rang. At first I was going to let it ring, but when it didn't let up I uncertainly got up and opened the door. Now what? To my great relief it was Else-Marie, Herman's fiance, and Marit, her friend. We hugged a long time and went in to the living room to talk. Both of them had cried. I knew if I cried "they (the Nazis) would break me," and I couldn't let that happen.

"Practical" was the key word for the moment. Our feelings had to be put on hold. What would be the best strategy for me? What was my destiny? Should I stay here alone or go home with Else-Marie? Or should I try to escape? The latter was out of the question. I had to find out about my family first. I also thought it best to stay home, in case the Nazis came to the house and found it deserted. They might think that I had left the country and take reprisals on the rest of the family, the very thing that had prevented us from leaving in the first place - except en masse.

To be practical meant to try to preserve some of our belongings. We got a couple of boxes to pack away a few pieces of china and silver, but didn't take time to pack anything securely, for the Nazis could be there any minute to confiscate, as they called it. We called it stealing. The china was put in stacks in the boxes with very little paper around, (we didn't have much); the silver was wrapped in a towel and put at the bottom. Then we took the boxes up to the attics and placed them in a corner, unmarked. Our lockers would be the first place the Germans would look. They would take anything they could get their hands on, as they had done in Germany and other countries they had occupied.

It was good to be busy. We needed to be engrossed with trivial things. We talked without emotion and looked at each

other as little as possible, but we couldn't indefinitely avoid the subject that was most on our minds, and we finally discussed what would be best for me to do the following day. It would be most important to know where the prisoners were. In the morning I should try to find out, so that I could give them underwear and other necessities I would bring with me. I felt sure I would be able to reach them. Beyond that I refused to think.

The doorbell rang again, and this time it was Petter. I was glad to see him. Remember, it was not until years later I reflected on the situation and found him lacking. The others were glad to see him too. They had been in contact with him earlier and told him to come, but I don't know if they expected him.

Did we have anything to eat? I doubt it, but I do remember I had a bottle of brandy in the cupboard. I got some glasses, and we finished the bottle while we small-talked. Usually I can't drink a glass of wine without being affected, but I drank several glasses without feeling any effect. It did make me sleep through that night, for which I was grateful.

What did I feel? What did I think? I truly can't tell you, Jesse. I was numb. It never entered my mind that I would not see all of them again. I was sure, however, that they would be away till the end of the war, except for my father. They had

never kept older men before, why would they now? They would all come back, of that I was sure. They had never touched women and children before either, so I felt fairly secure. I must have been like an ostrich who buries its head in the sand. Or maybe my body's built-in defense system was at work, so that the shock wouldn't take over. I truly can't tell.

March 23, 1990

I got up early the next morning and dressed in knickers and heavy walking boots, stuffed my ruck-sack full of men's warm underwear, socks, sweaters, and hard biscuits. Then I started my round. VICTORIA TERRACE, the German Headquarters, was my initial stop. I asked the first man I saw where the Jews were. He ignored me completely for a long time. When I kept asking, he answered without looking at me that he didn't know. I insisted that he or someone tell me where they had taken the Jewish prisoners. Nobody listened to me, but I wouldn't give up. I asked every person coming and going until someone told me they had been moved to Bredtvedt, a camp north of Oslo.

It took the whole morning to reach my destiny. I took a bus and a streetcar and walked and walked and walked some more without finding the place. Everybody I asked knew that Bredtvedt was in the vicinity, but nobody knew exactly how to get there. They had heard about people who had gone for a walk

near there and had been taken prisoners, but couldn't tell me more. They had all heard about the Jews and thought it a terrible thing. They wished they could be of more help. All the while I was thinking: "What if they sent me on a wild goosechase? What if they are not there?"

I finally found the camp and talked to a guard. He was only a young boy and was eager to talk. My worst fears were realized. "Yes, the Jews had been there, but they were gone." "Where?" I asked. The guard didn't know. "Find out!" I screamed, "I have to know where my family is!" The guard kept saying he didn't know, he couldn't leave his post, nobody knew where the Jews were, he only knew they had been there. I wouldn't give up before I knew their destination, and the guard finally told me to go to the office and inquire. I insisted that he walk me to the office to show me the way, and he did when he understood that he couldn't get rid of me in any other way.

I don't know from where my strength came, but when we reached the office I screamed at the top of my lungs that I wasn't moving until they told me where my family was. If the Germans had been in charge, they would surely have arrested me. But the Norwegian Quislings were in charge, and the majority at the camp were young boys who didn't understand what was going on. Finally someone went to investigate after I asked: "What if it had been your family? Have you no shame?" It was a wonder they

helped me at all, but they probably had not yet gotten orders to arrest the Jewish women and didn't know what to do with me. A man came back to tell me that the Jews were on the way to BERG CONCENTRATION CAMP.

He explained that BERG was close to Tønsberg, and it would be futile for me to try to get to them. The camp was located some 70 miles south of Oslo. It wasn't easy in those days to get around without a car, and private cars were rare. But I was determined to find a way to get there. I knew a girl who lived in Tønsberg, Eva, and I would get hold of her somehow, if she was still in town.

When I got home I grabbed a piece of bread and butter, and went to the hospital to visit Nusse. She started sobbing the minute she saw me and, between sobs, told me how Rolle had been there to see her and how the Nazis had come in after him and taken him away. It must have been difficult for both of them to be separated this way and at this special time in their lives. Nusse was in danger of losing her baby if she got up from bed, and she was terrified of what was going to happen to all of them. Rolle had tried to calm her down and promised her he would be back. His promise came through a couple of years later, but that is another story. There was nothing I could do for Nusse at the time but tell her I would be back the following day.

Before I went home I stopped at the bank. I wanted to get out the money we had on the passbook before the Germans did. At the bank the teller looked at me, then took my passbook to one of the officers, and they both went away for a while. I was wondering what was happening and if I would have any luck at all. I knew that the proclamation from the day before had stated that all property belonging to the Jews had been confiscated, but I had hoped that it would take some time before the orders would go through and that the teller wouldn't notice that I was Jewish. How naive I was indeed! The accounts had been marked long before. Another person opened a new window so that there wouldn't be a line waiting. I waited for some time.

When the teller came back she didn't look at me, didn't say a word, just handed me the money for the amount we had in the passbook. I thanked her and left. When I came home and looked at the book, I noticed that she had dated the withdrawal one day earlier. I was thankful for the sign of humanity from the bank officials, which came at a time in my life when I needed it the most. I needed the money too. For the first time in my life I had to support myself. It was unthinkable to go back to work now as if nothing had happened.

My next stop was the police station. I showed them my I.D. Card which had been stamped with a J for Jew some time before. The officers at the station were embarrassed. They told me

that they had nothing to do with arresting the Jews, that the Quislings and the Nazis were solely responsible. They also said that in their station they were all "JØSSINGER," the name all good Norwegians used to distinguish them from the Nazis. I didn't have to come every day, just check in at my own convenience. Only later did I realize that it was their way of telling me to get out of the country; they wouldn't report my absence to the Nazis.

When I left, one of the officers ran after me and asked if I needed money. They had taken up a collection to help those who had been left with nothing. I assured him that I was O.K., but promised to tell him if I ran out of money, thankful for every little bit of kindness I encountered.

Jesse, it is hard for me to go back and live through that whole nightmare again. I will take a break and come back later.

Love, Grandma

September 4, 1990

My dear Jesse,

After the atrocities I experienced during World War II it is unbelievable that here you, my grandson, are in a foreign country in a zone that might soon go to war. We were thrilled to be able to talk to you. Modern technology lets us be in touch albeit thousands of miles apart! For me that is amazing - it was not that easy during my war. Whenever you feel out of touch and need to talk, call collect if a phone is available.

You want to know about my feelings when I learned that you were going overseas, compared to how I felt when my brothers were arrested. They can't be compared, Jesse, they are two different issues. I'll try to explain. When my family suddenly was imprisoned I was shocked and angry. I was also terrified because I knew how Hitler treated Jews. I was aware that the people I loved the most were going through a hellish time. I had heard stories from both men and women who had been in German concentration camps, and they were unbelievably gruesome. Whenever my thoughts went in that direction, I had to push the images away to be able to survive.

DESCRIPTION OF BOOK

The book is about my life. It has taken me 50 years to be able to write about the Holocaust and how it affected my life. My grandson enlisted in the Navy and was sent to the Persian Gulf in the Fall of 1990, where he stayed until the war was over. I sent him a letter every day to keep his spirits up, and to make my letters more interesting for a young boy, I told him my story from World War II. I think that any book written on the Holocaust by a person who experienced that time is an antidote to the groups who deny it happened. It is important that the evil of the nazis is not forgotten. As the only one of my family who was not being taken to the concentration camps, the least I can do is to be a witness.

I am a Norwegian emigrant of Jewish decent, and the story starts when the nazis decided to eradicate all Norwegian Jews. October 27, 1942 the Jewish men were arrested, including my father and my three brothers and were put in a concentration camp in Norway. I stayed home alone for a month.

In the early morning of November 27, 1942, I was warned that all Jewish women and children were being tracked down and arrested. I wandered the street several hours until I ended up in the Catholic hospital where my doctor did some belated female surgery on me. Through the grapevine the resistance workers had been informed where I was and helped me escape in a most dramatic way. I stayed underground fourteen days before I finally managed a narrow escape to Sweden. Sweden was neutral during the war and a haven for the Norwegian refugees.

The book is in five sections. The first tells about the infamous days the Jews were transported on the ship "Donau" to Germany, from there to Auschwitz where my father and two brothers were brutally murdered. One of my brothers was left in the Norwegian concentration camp because he was married to a Christian. This part also describes my incredible escape.

The second part describes my refugee time in Sweden, how I got my brother in Norway out of the concentration camp with the help of Albert Brock-Utne, a Norwegian scientist and well known journalist, how I met my husband, Kristian Gippo, and how the close, lifelong friendship between Brock-Utne, Kris and me developed. Further I tell of my marriage to Kris two days before he was sent overseas to England to serve in the Norwegian Army established in exile in Scotland. Under my maiden name Elsa Dickmn I published a novel during the time Kris was away. It was later published in Norway.

The third part of the book again includes letters to my grandson. I recollect some stories from the war in Norway and some of my family life before the war. The fourth part tells about our travels to America in 1946 with our friend Brock-Utne, our reason for going when I was almost eight months pregnant, why we decided to stay and our struggle in achieving this feat. The last part of the book is scenes from Oregon where we moved and later attained our citizenship papers.

In "The One Who Was Left Behind" I have tried to go beyond the story itself to express the intrinsic values of true family unit. Today, when families are breaking down and both political parties put so much emphasis on family values, this story shows how impossible situations can be overcome where strong family ties are working. A grandmother's letters from a war to a grandson in war 50 years later have two purposes: one is to give the grandson a sense of strong family continuity, the other is to help him understand that freedom should never be taken for granted. It has to be perpetually fought for.

I feel that the book will have value and usefulness for any reader for two reasons: first, by showing how love and care can strengthen the bond between family members and, second, the bearing of witness for the Holocaust.

I wasn't happy when I learned that you were going to the Persian Gulf. I was scared but also proud. I felt much the same as I did when your Grandpa, during World War II, was sent to fight in the Norwegian Army in England, only a few days after we were married. Both of you were going to fight for freedom, Grandpa for his own and his country's freedom, you for another country's freedom - but both of you for freedom from tyranny. You've heard me say many times, freedom does not come for free, you have to fight for it. There are always tyrants who want to take over, who kill and torture those whom they conceive to be their enemies, and against them we all have to stand firm.

When you left, I knew you were not in the hands of the enemy. You were in a force strong enough to destroy the enemy. You are going to fight for freedom for a nation that has been overrun with tyrants, just as Norway was during the German occupation. You come from a nation where freedom is considered the pulse of our society, valued above all other amenities in our country. If you had been Saddam Hussein's hostage, I would have been terrified, and with good reason. But you went into the Navy of your own free will. I know you hadn't planned on being in a war when you enlisted, none of us had expected that. But, when you enlist in the military, defense is their business, and in defense wars happen. It is stressful for us to know that you are so far away in a foreign country and in a troubled zone. We still have hope that there may not be a war. Maybe the

madman will get out of Kuwait. One can always hope. For you it is boring to just sit on the ship and wait and do nothing; I remember you on the run, restless, impulsive. You never could sit still. I feel for you, my darling, but this one you will have to sit out, there is no other way. At least you are on the sea. *How I miss the ocean.*

In a workshop for the teachers last Thursday at your high school, the principal asked for a minute of silence for all the boys who were overseas in the Persian Gulf. The only name he remembered right away was Jesse Gippo, so your name was mentioned. You are far away, but you are not forgotten. You'll come home a hero.

Now let me go on with my story from October 1942.

I mentioned that I knew Eva, who lived in Tønsberg. I didn't have to look for her, she came to me the next morning. Let me give you a little background. Your Uncle Sigurd was still married, but when he found out that his wife, who was not Jewish, was sleeping with a German officer, he sought a divorce and was expecting the papers to end his marriage any day. Eva was his new girl friend, and I knew her through him. She had just come back from her home in Tønsberg, the location of Berg Concentration camp, where her father and brothers had been interned the day the Jewish men had been arrested.

She was in an agitated state and wanted to know what had happened to Sigurd. I told her what I knew and that my intentions were to go down to the camp to deliver the things I already had packed in my rucksack. She immediately invited me to stay with her and her mother; she also knew the train schedule by heart and we both decided to take the next train down, which left around four or five that afternoon.

Eva went to buy tickets while I called on Nusse, who had come home from the hospital because she was afraid the Germans would take her home away if she wasn't living in it. She was lying down. Claiming four flights of stairs was not the best thing she could have done in her condition, but she was determined that the Germans shouldn't get her home. Nusse is not Jewish, and the home was in her name. She thought she had a good chance of keeping it. I told her what I was going to do and that she wouldn't see me for a couple of days.

Soon Eva and I were on the way to Vestbanestasjonen (The West Station). I mention the name of the station, for when you go to Norway you will want to know where it is, though it isn't a railroad station anymore. Oslo now has a brand new Central Station from where trains go in all direction under ground and above ground all over Norway and to every country in Europe.

But the West station will still be there. The building is too beautiful to tear down and will be preserved. Maybe it will become a museum; I hope something important will happen to it.

It was still early and seats easy to get, but neither Eva nor I wanted to sit between German soldiers who were everywhere, in the corridors, on the seats, outside each cabin. We found ourselves two places together, besides civilians. We were uneasy, dared not look at each other nor speak to each other. We didn't know if the civilians were German sympathizers or Jøssinger.

A train ride that usually takes two hours lasted at least five hours. The train would stand still for long periods, then we would move a few miles, then stop again. We thought we would never get there, all the time being afraid that we would be discovered and interrogated. We kept our heads down, and pretended to be asleep. When we finally got to our destination without incidents, we hurriedly got off and started to walk to Eva's home. Eva's mother was glad to see us. She had a meal ready for us, and we rested a while. In the middle of the night we sneaked out to the concentration camp. Eva knew the way.

When we got there, only one guard was at the entrance. He warned us to stop and we did. He was a Norwegian Quisling, a young boy, and we found that to be to our advantage. There was no hatred for the Jews in Norway, as there was in Germany, although ignorant people didn't like Jews because they were different, and they had been taught that the Jews had killed Jesus. We hoped this guard would be more Norwegian than Quisling. We had also brought with us money and food to bribe him should it be necessary. We hoped it would work.

We told him who we were and that we wanted to deliver food and clothing to our families. Since he lived in Tønsberg he knew Eva's family, and that helped our cause. He said at the outset that he couldn't do anything to help us, but Eva started a conversation with him and asked what school he had gone to, what sports he played, and when it turned out they had gone to the same school, it gave them something to talk about. I asked what had led him to be a guard but couldn't get any satisfactory answer. He just shrugged his shoulders, it was a job. We talked a long time before we again asked him to help us. The guard kept shaking his head until we came up with some money and food, and the promise of more to come. He weakened and finally agreed to cooperate. We gave him what food and clothing we had brought with us, the letters to our families and Sigurd's name as a contact. We agreed to be back the next night with more money and more food both for him and the prisoners.

Jesse, it worked! The following night we went back, and the guard gave us letters and notes from some of the prisoners to their families, and I had a note from Sigurd. We delivered more food for the prisoners and bribes for the guard, and said we would be there again soon. When we got back to the house, we read the notes eager to know how they were being treated. The notes were written on any scrap of paper they could dig up. Some of them said they were O.K., some were full of anguish. Sigurd's note gave us all a much needed laugh. He had always been concerned about his looks (he was a handsome guy), but we had never dreamed that he would be concerned about his looks in a concentration camp. Apparently he was, because he asked for pomade to keep his hair in place. Or was that his way of saying: "They are not going to break me!" Now I will never know, and I ache inside when I think about it.

The next night we were back, this time with the pomade for Sigurd. We got more notes, some written on the paper we had sent them. Since we now had established contact, Eva could take care of affairs here, while I went back to Oslo to deliver the letters and get more food to bring the prisoners. Eva and her mother were getting low on supplies.

By the time I was back in Oslo, the Red Cross had arranged to bring food to the prisoners twice a week, and all the Jewish women met at Fanny Scheer's to make sandwiches to send them. We

bought what we could on the black market, emptied our own cupboards, and with the food friends gave us, we had enough sandwiches to send the time they were there. Sandwiches were the only food we were allowed to send, so we put our love and concern into every sandwich we made, assured that at least twice a week our loved ones got decent food to eat. Alas, if that had only been true! The prisoners got only a fraction of what we sent, if any at all, but we didn't know that then.

The letters had to be delivered and in the dead of night I sneaked around town to pass them on. It was scary. With every sound of heavy German boots hitting the ground, I disappeared inside a portal. In "the good old days" there were no locks on the entrance halls to the apartment buildings so that it was possible for me to be invisible. Before the war, even after I was grown, I was afraid of the dark, but during the war I started to appreciate darkness. In hiding time one always thinks of the dark as a friend. There were no incidents, for which I was grateful, and back home in my own bed I felt safe although alone and lonely. The next morning, while we were making sandwiches, I heard discussions about the letters and notes from the prisoners but didn't dare let on that I had delivered them.

I love you very much, my darling, and think of you without fail. Grandpa sends his love.

Grandma

September 7, 1990

Dearest Jesse,

The news from here is meager, so I'll go on with my story instead.

I never got down to Tønsberg again, but I did hear from Eva that she had managed to make one more contact. We believed that the Red Cross had succeeded in delivering some of the food we were preparing, and Eva thought it fruitless for me to come so far when the need wasn't there.

At the Scheer place where we were making sandwiches, all kinds of rumors were circulating: either we were going to be sent to Madagaskar or to a concentration camp in Poland. There was no doubt in anyone's mind that sooner or later the women would be arrested. Every day the sandwich-making crew became smaller. The missing persons were not mentioned openly in conversation, but we knew they had escaped and wished them luck. I still felt that I could not leave the country as long as any member of my family was interned.

I was lonely. I was in constant contact with Else-Marie and Nusse, but avoided my friends. I didn't want them to get in trouble because of me, but the main reason I avoided them was the

fear of being rejected, a denial I was not in an emotional state of mind to take right then. I was on the run constantly, trying to get hold of food and clothing for the prisoners, and even if friends had wanted to get in touch with me, they couldn't because we were without a telephone.

The rumors about Jewish women being arrested intensified, so much that one day Else-Marie insisted that I stay with her and her family instead of sleeping at home, where I surely wouldn't be safe. She accompanied me home to help me pack a few necessities in a small suitcase. Before we left, we took down the Mezuzah by the outside door. Papa had never entered the home without touching his fingers first to his mouth and then to the Mezuzah. I took it down for many reasons. It was a private thing that my father valued, and I did not want the Germans to deface it. Too, if the Mezuzah was there, the Nazis would immediately know that it was a Jewish home. Without it they might hesitate before they destroyed or stole anything. Until the last I wanted to save our home; we grew up learning that "your home is your castle," and you protect it, whether it is rich or poor.

The thought of reprisals against my family was still so strong in me that we left a note on the door explaining where I was staying, so that the Nazis, if they came to check on me, would know I hadn't left the country.

While I stayed with Else-Marie I became ill. Lying motionless on my back, I wouldn't eat or talk, couldn't sleep. I thought of my mother and how lucky she was to be dead. I was almost crushed with depression. Suddenly I couldn't face the world. At that time there were no counselors to help you overcome depression. You either took care of it yourself, or you went crazy. It took Else-Marie's anger to get me out of bed and dressed. She scolded me for giving up and accused me of no longer caring for my family. That got me going, and I went down to the Scheer place to help with the sandwiches again. The small group left said they had missed me and thought I had escaped to Sweden.

Every day we could feel the tension in the city mount. At the Scheer house they now talked openly about fleeing to Sweden, while it was still possible. But we all stayed for the same reason: we wanted to be able to send food packages to our families as long as we could.

I myself was indecisive and insecure. How could I get over the border on my own when I didn't know the way and without being discovered? It isn't that easy to pack up and leave the only existence you have experienced, the only home you have had, the security of known streets and familiar faces. Our home wasn't rich, but it had always been a safe haven. Whenever the boys in the streets were unkind and called me names, I ran home

and knew that the minute the door closed behind me I was safe. I also realized that wasn't true anymore, but still I stayed. Even if I didn't sleep there, it was still the only home I had known.

One day Else-Marie came home from work and said she had heard that the Germans were ready to arrest the Jewish women and children. This time it was not rumors, it was going to happen. After dinner we went to my home to remove the note on the door with information where I could be found. I also dressed in knickers, ski boots and heavy sweaters, and stuffed in my rucksack a long, woolen robe that Rolle had made for me. I loved that robe. It was warm and cozy, and you know, Jesse, that robe helped save my life. I became so attached to it that I took it with me to America and hung on to it for more than twenty years.

That night was the last time I saw my childhood home.

Early the next morning, about 4:00am, the phone rang. Else-Marie answered the phone, then turned around to look at me. I understood enough from the conversation to get up and dress in my ski outfit. She gave the phone to me. Marit was on the other end. She was crying hard, almost hysterically, and told me that I had to get out immediately, right away, now, because the Germans had started their surge. They had just arrested the person who stayed with her next door neighbors, and if they didn't find me at home they would search my friends' homes.

I wasn't secure there, I had to go NOW. I grabbed the already packed rucksack and ran. Out on the dark streets, I felt a little less panicky. I put the rucksack over my shoulders and started walking, without knowing where to go or what to do. I walked the streets aimlessly; I must have walked miles. I never sat down, just kept on walking. It was winter. It stayed dark a long time, and I didn't have to worry about being recognized as long as it was dark, the only thing in my favor. It was a lonely feeling. I was sure that the Germans would get me sooner or later, but when I tried to picture myself in captivity in a concentration camp, my mind drew a blank. I knew I wouldn't survive those ghastly conditions very long. The letters I had carried back from Berg Concentration Camp had told a harrowing story.

I had to find a way out before daylight. If I didn't, I would soon be picked up. The only idea that came to my mind was the doctor. Some time ago I had planned on going into to the hospital to correct an irregularity in the uterus which made my monthly periods extremely painful. But where I had hesitated to make a decision before, I thought, why not now? It would maybe give me a couple of days' respite. I knew that the Nazis had started to take people away from their sickbeds in the hospitals; hospitals were no longer a safe haven. Still I couldn't think of another thing to do.

At 9 o'clock I found myself sitting in the doctor's office. The waiting room was full when I got there, and all eyes were on me when I came in. As soon as the doctor came in the door, she saw me and asked me into her office ahead of the others. Nobody protested.

"What are you doing here?" she asked. "I have nowhere to go," I answered. "I thought maybe you could help," and I told her what I had in mind. At first she said that it was impossible for her to admit me to the hospital. I wouldn't be safe, the hospital would get in trouble, it was not a good idea. "Don't you know anybody who could help you get to Sweden?" she asked. I just shook my head. Then I suddenly thought of something Aunt Rose had mentioned one day before she left, and mumbled, "I can try". The doctor told me to go, but if I didn't have any luck, I should come back at 12 o'clock, and we would go from there.

I vaguely remembered that Tante Rose had told me she knew of someone in a dairy store near her, who helped Jews and others to escape to Sweden. That was probably the same place she got help when she and Uncle Karl escaped. I knew the store and was walking fast with my head down. When I got to the store, nobody was there, but then a woman came in from the back room. She looked surprised when she saw me and said: "What are you doing here?" You must realize, Jess, at that time in Norway, every Gentile knew a Jewish face.

I told her I needed help, but she shook her head and said I was too late, she couldn't help me. The organization which helped Jewish people escape had been discovered, and every member had either gone underground or escaped to Sweden. One had been arrested. She also told me of two German ships in the harbor that were to take all the Jewish people to Poland. I could hardly absorb what she was telling me. It was a nightmare. She gave me the name of another place where I might be able to get help. I went there, with the same negative result: it was too late. It was almost noon, and I hurried back to the doctor's office.

The doctor had been expecting me. She had talked to Mother Superior in the Catholic hospital with which she was associated, and they were willing to admit me, but the orders from German Headquarters were that anyone wanted by them would have their clothes taken away so that escape would not be possible, and their presence would have to be reported. The doctor would also have to operate on me that same evening. If I were willing to abide by those rules, they would let me in. As I had no other choice, I agreed, and we left for the hospital.

I got into bed immediately and undressed under the blanket, but kept my bra and underpants on. The nurse had been ordered to take away my clothes, and I nodded and pointed to the heap beside the bed. She obviously was not happy about her task, and while

she was busy doing something else in the room, I took the opportunity to hide my long robe in the bed. I was allowed to keep my slippers. I don't know what possessed me to hide my robe, I just knew that I couldn't give it up. I took it because I needed it emotionally, but it turned out to be a much more important article than a security blanket.

That evening at the operating table the doctor explained that there was no anesthetic available. The little they had would be needed for more serious operations. She would do the surgery in three sections and give me some morphine. Otherwise I would not be able to take the pain. I was given a shot. It relaxed me, but I remember telling myself, "This is good pain. This is not a German experiment," and I murmured over and over, "Poor them, poor them." It was as if my mind left my body, and I was looking at myself on that table. The pain was bearable. The next morning and then again the same afternoon the procedures were repeated, and I came through the experience exceedingly well.

During visiting hours the next day something strange happened. A man I had never seen before came to my bedside and sat down. He asked if I was Kari, but I told him my name was Elsa. He didn't seem to care what my name was. He had come to help me escape, and if I could be ready between seven and nine that evening, someone would come for me. He mentioned God and

humanity many times and said that he would pray for me. I looked at him and nodded. After he left I drew the curtains around my bed and painstakingly started to put on my underclothes and my robe. I pretended to sleep, so that I was left alone the rest of the evening. I wondered how anybody could come for me at that time, but so much had happened lately that nothing seemed to be impossible.

I looked at my watch almost every other minute, until finally 7:00 o'clock arrived. Then the waiting started for real. I waited - and waited - and waited. Eight came around, then nine, ten, eleven, midnight. Nobody came. The hours went by - one, two, three, four, five and six. By then I had given up hope - no knight in a shining armor would be there to rescue me. No white horse, not now - not ever! I was doomed.

Why had this strange man come and given me an earful of God, humanity and prayers, promised me life instead of death, and then never shown up? I never knew who he was, what had happened, if he had talked to the wrong person, if it was a trap to catch resistance workers, or if he was arrested. All I knew was that his God had refused to help me. It was devastating. What would I do? I had never deeply believed in God but had thought that if there really was a God, He would be kind and good. Lately I had thought that a kind and almighty God couldn't possibly have let these terrible things happen. My belief that man was his own destiny took stronger hold in me than ever.

Several bouquets of flowers were delivered to the room. When they turned out to be for me, I was overcome with emotions for a while but quickly recovered. Time went by slowly until visiting hours. Then I was delightfully surprised. All my non-Jewish friends came by with delicacies to eat and encouraging words. How did they know I was in the hospital? They said everybody knew, and they were planning on getting me out. My spirits improved immensely.

None of them mentioned the ships in the harbor, and I didn't dare to ask if they had left yet. Later I learned of the complete havoc on the ship that transported the Norwegian Jews to their death in Auschwitz. Families were separated, the men on one deck, the women and children on another, the older boys were separated from their mothers. In all that confusion a constant singing from the prisoners was reported.

That day in the hospital I got two proposals of marriage, one from a peasant who knew my father and was the same age as my father, and one from a friend of Sigurd's. They both thought that by changing my maiden name they would save me from the Germans. But marriage was far from my thoughts at that time, and I declined both proposals. I couldn't see myself milking cows and feeding chickens, nor as a housewife. But they both wanted to look out for my welfare, although I know it wasn't all pure altruism since they had both proposed marriage before.

To be on the safe side, when midnight came I was dressed in my robe again, in case I had heard wrong, but by two o'clock I had given up hope, took off my clothes and slept a little.

Well, Jesse, that's all for now. I will continue in the next letter. There was later an account of that infamous day when the Jews, even though they were Norwegian citizens, were sent away on a German ship to be murdered in the gas chambers of Auschwitz, but at that time I was not able to read through the report. I have read almost all the books published about the camps. When the books started to come out I was working in a bookstore and had access to every new book that was published. But that special report I saw for the first time when I visited Norway years later, and I never could bring myself to read it.

For the record, that unforgettable day when the women and children were arrested and all Jews taken to the ships in the harbor, that day I walked the streets with nowhere to go, that day I had light surgery without anesthetic, that day the sky was falling, was November 26, 1942, one month from the date when all the men were arrested, thirty years ^{AND ONE DAY} ✓ to the day before you were born.

Much love, Grandma

September 10, 1990

Dearest Jesse,

Do you get my letters? This will be No 12. It is a little unnerving to have you stationed on a ship in the Persian Gulf without being able to hear from you. Of course you are O.K., but I would like to hear your voice or see your handwriting if it is at all possible.

There is still no real news from here so let me go on with the story.

I was hot and feverish the next morning, and the nurse was concerned. I told her not to be, I was O.K.. I knew exactly why I wasn't feeling well, but couldn't tell her, of course. There were some friends looking in on me that morning, but nobody seemed to know anything about a rescue attempt, not even Marit, and she had told me there were forces around to help me get out. To this day I wonder about that man.

The morning passed slowly and visiting hours came. Two men came to my bed and acted as if they were old friends. The one was tall and handsome, the other small and insignificant looking. The small one, Finn, sat down in the chair, took my hand and

leaned over: "Can you get up?" he whispered. I nodded. He made a sign for the tall one to go and whispered again: "The restroom is right around the corner. Get dressed and go there. Nils will be there with some other clothes." "I don't have anything but my robe," I whispered back. "That'll do. Get going."

Under the bed covers I took off my gown, put on underclothes and the robe, and got out of bed. I had been up the day before when I talked to the stranger who never showed up and had fainted on the way back to bed. The nurse had mumbled "foolish girl" when she helped me back. In those days patients were kept completely immovable for days after an incision, big or little. This time I felt stronger and more sure of myself but still wobbled when I started to walk. Finn looked a little nervous and asked again if I could make it. I assured him I was O.K., and walked as straight as I could into the bathroom.

Nils was already there, and helped me don men's clothing. After I put on the pants, he smilingly reminded me to button the fly. Over the suit I put on a large overcoat. Then came the hat, the Humphrey Bogart kind, over my hair, which was too long and thick to get into the hat. Instead I put the coat collar up to hide my hair. I got a glimpse of myself in the mirror before we went out the door and was almost frightened by the sight, but it also made me laugh. Too bad there are no pictures to show you, Jess. I really was a sight.

"What shall I do with my robe?" I asked.

"Leave it," he said.

November 11, 1994

Jesse, it was good to hear your voice. I am sorry you are in the hospital ward. I hope your leg is O.K. by now. Take care of yourself, my darling. I want you back whole and well. Now on with my story:

Nils had one hand in his pocket when he and I stepped out of the bathroom, and kept it there the whole time while holding on to me with his other hand. Finn came out of the ward and grabbed my other arm, and in the same moment a doctor and two sisters came around the corner. The doctor was looking down on a chart, but the sisters saw us and knew what was going on immediately. One of them hurried to a telephone. Nils and Finn half lifted, half dragged me down four flights of stairs. We had to pass the reception desk to get to the front door, and the receptionist was just putting down the phone when she saw us. Before we could get out the door, she cried hysterically, "Stop, you can't go out, you can't go out." We were afraid to make a scene, so we stopped.

Finn begged the receptionist to let us go, but she didn't dare to do that on her own. He then demanded to talk to Mother

Superior. He was clearly in command. We also needed a place to wait he told her. We couldn't stay in the reception area, where people had started to stare. She pointed to a door, and we went into a living room. I sank down in a chair. "You'd better go," I said to the men, "it is no use for your lives to be in danger." "We will get you out of here, don't worry," Finn said. "We'll get you out of here for sure, we promise," Nils said. I heard him say to Finn that he would go outside and tell the driver that we were delayed. He looked at me and said, "I'll be back."

After he had left, Finn walked nervously around the room. I asked if there were more people involved, and he answered that it was only the driver. "Why did Nils have his hand in the pocket all this time?" I asked. "Oh, that," Finn answered. "He has a gun, just in case we needed to scare someone. We won't use it unless it is absolutely necessary," he assured me. A gun, I thought, if they find us with a gun, they will shoot us on the spot. I again told Finn to get out while there was time, not put his life in danger for me. He stopped pacing the floor, and said, "I'll go and find Mother Superior, but I will be back, believe me, I will be back." I nodded and believed him.

I believed him for a while, but the longer I sat, the less I believed, and eventually I had to face the fact that the next person who came through the door would not be a friend. I was in a vacuum, immobile; my destiny had finally been decided upon. I

must have been frightened but didn't feel the terror. Resigned to the reality that I too would go to a concentration camp, my thoughts went in that direction. I certainly would not survive long in a camp. I wouldn't want to subsist there. I would rather die. And a conflicting thought: "It's a good thing I had this operation. I won't have trouble with my period." There was no communication between my deep feelings of disgust and the more practical aspects of life. Then lightning struck: But the others are there. They don't want to be there either, but they don't have a choice. Poor them. Oh God, why is this happening?

Time went by. I don't know how long, hours I think. Apathetically I just sat. Not once did I get up from the chair to look out the window or to find out what was happening. I hoped that the two men had escaped. It was good of them to put their lives on the line for me whom they didn't even know. Surely they had gone by now. Since they had a gun, I realized that they must belong to the Underground.

All kinds of thoughts went through my head. The only one I couldn't bear was the condition of the camps. I knew how bad they were, but to visualize my father and brothers living under those circumstances was unbearable. There was no way I could see myself in that situation either. Instead I let my thought wander to my good friends, how nice they had all been to me. Maybe I should have married and shielded myself under another

name, I thought. But somehow that didn't feel right. If I had covered myself under a Christian name, I would have betrayed my heritage. I couldn't do that. I couldn't be a deserter. My brothers had instilled in me that to be a coward was the worst.

Suddenly Finn was there! There was no time for talking, "Come", he said and grabbed my hand. We ran out the back door, down a corridor, down some stairs and out a door, across a cobblestone yard and out a gate. A car was parked by the curb, and I was shoved into the car down on the floor. The car took off. Then Finn started to talk. He told how he had talked to Mother Superior for two hours, trying to get her permission to go. She had in turn told him that if she let me go, she and the whole hospital staff would be in danger. Finn had told her how I would go to my death in the worst possible circumstances, and asked if she could have that on her conscience? "They won't do anything to you if you tell them that we escaped from here. That is not your fault," he implored her, but she kept shaking her head. Then he got down on his knees and pleaded with her, he said, and she just turned around and stood there. Finn took that for her consent, and he rushed in to get me, "and the rest you know," he said.

"But how did the car get there," I asked. "The car had waited there since Nils went out to tell the driver that we had been delayed," Finn answered. "Where is Nils now," I asked. "I

am right here," he answered from the front of the car. I hadn't seen him because I was still on the floor of the car. They explained to me that they would take me to an apartment where I would stay until they could get me out of the country. "When we get out of the car, we have to walk over a pretty large yard, and if somebody should see us, you will have to pretend that you are drunk and we are helping you up the stairs," Finn told me. "Don't be afraid," he assured me, "you will be O.K."

Everything went as planned. There were people in the yard, and I pretended I couldn't walk by myself but had to be helped up the stairs. In fact, there wasn't much pretence in my not being able to walk. I was so weak I thought I might not make it up the stairs, and they would have to carry me. We had to walk up five flights to the top of the apartment building. When we finally reached the flat and I was stretched out on a sofa, they explained to me the reason they chose that apartment. It had an escape route. If I went out the back door, up the stairs, over the loft, through a door, over another loft, down the stairs and in another door, I would come to another flat, just like the one I was in now. But, they assured me, not to worry, nothing would happen, I would be safe.

The flat belonged to a man call Lars, who was not there at the moment. He was a bachelor, and they thought it would be easier for me if a woman stayed with me. The driver's name was

Karl, and he and Finn left, while Nils stayed behind to keep me company until other arrangements could be made. "Why do you do this for me?" I asked. "We don't want the Germans to have you," was the answer.

The only thing I learned about Nils was that he was married and had a son, and belonged to a group that made difficulties for the Germans. He made me stay on the sofa, while he sat beside me, holding my hand and stroking my arm.

"Does your wife know that you are rescuing young women from hospitals?" I asked. He said she didn't know what he was doing, but she knew he was into something, because he was gone so much.

"I can't tell her everything," he said. "She is nervous anyway, and if she knew what I was up to, she wouldn't be able to function."

I nodded. "Can't say I blame her."

I wanted to know how they knew about me, and what was going to happen next. It turned out that a friend of mine from school had mentioned me to her brother, Harry, and he again had mentioned me to someone in their organization, and the rest I knew.

"What is going to happen next?" I wanted to know.

He explained that Finn and Karl had gone to Harry's house to ask his wife, Nell, if she would stay with me for a few days, and have Lars stay with Harry.

"I have met Nell," I exclaimed, "Would Nell do that for me? She hardly knows me!"

Well Jess, this is all for now. Love you, big guy.

Love, Grandma

September 12, 1990

Dear Jesse,

Your father was just here and told me you had called. It's good to hear that your leg is better.

As you have probably heard from your Dad, grandpa and I were in Europe this summer. We bought a Volvo in Sweden and toured Scandinavia. We have been home for a while waiting for the car to come, and it's here now. We are excited about the car. It will be fun to drive.

Back to the story. I left you when I had escaped from the hospital and hid in Lars' apartment. Nell came to stay with me, and we became good friends. I had met Nell before, but I didn't really know her. It seems that by word of mouth, the Underground fighters had heard that I was in the hospital and decided I was NOT going to end up in the hands of the Nazis. I had become their special project, and to take care of me was much more pleasant than some of the other jobs they had to do.

Let me give you a little background. Kari was my friend from grade school. We had been together since 2nd grade and had

become very close. The last time we had been on vacation together, she had met her husband, Øivind, who also became my good friend. Kari and Øivind are some of the people we always see when we go to Norway. Whenever Øivind and I see each other, we start having fun. We talk silly, act like teenagers, laugh a lot and make everybody laugh with us. I met Thorbjørn on the same trip, a charming boy. We were infatuated with each other though we knew from the beginning that our relationship could never last, but the four of us had some great times together.

It sounds frightening and grim to be in hiding, to go underground. In the beginning when I heard about the Underground Movement, I thought it meant that the hiding were mostly done in basements or tunnels that really were under the ground. In many cases that was true, but my hiding experiences, at least in the beginning, were pure joy. Living in Lars' apartment was not frightening at all. When somebody wanted to come in, we had a signal. The first four notes from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony was the admission key. We also had a signal for the phone calls. The caller would let it ring once, then hang up, repeat it, and Nell would answer the third call. She and I became friends. She told me her life's story, and I am a good listener.

Every day at least one from the group came to see me, and he always brought goodies: chocolate bars, white bread, butter, real coffee, even meat, things I knew could only be had at the

black market, or stolen from the Germans. I understood they had excellent contacts in the Gestapo Headquarters, and the Germans had plenty of everything, most of it stolen from the Norwegian people. If my friends stole it back from the Germans, it was fine with me, but I knew it was dangerous business.

Sometimes the group were all in the apartment at the same time and the mood was party like. They took turns keeping me entertained, and it was good for me to laugh as much as I did, I felt like a human again. Nils and Finn showed up every single day. I don't know what kind of jobs they had, but they all worked at something, and money didn't seem to be a problem. When I wondered where they got everything, they just laughed and said they had their sources, and I shouldn't worry about it.

They must have belonged to a large group. The day after I arrived, a doctor from the group came to check on me. He told me to take it easy for a few days, gave me some medicine for pain, and left. There were a few precautions by which I must obey. I could go out only after dark and always accompanied by someone from the group. I must stay away from the window at all times and never answer the telephone or open the door. If someone knocked without using Beethoven's four notes, we were to take the escape route immediately, without hesitation. They encouraged me to walk around the apartment as much as possible so that I could gain my strenght back.

One day we heard heavy boots trampling up the stairs. It didn't sound like any of our friends, more like a German. When the knock came, it was not our signal. We looked at each other, then hurried quietly out the back door and locked it. We listened at the door for another knock, and when that came we hurried up the stairs. But then we heard the steps going down, we listened at the door again and when everything was quiet, we went back in. Later when Nils came, I ran and threw my arms around him. There was an innocent flirtation going on between us. I knew he liked me, and he was my hero.

After we told him what had happened, he said it was only one of the guys who had been on a sabotage mission and didn't know about me or the latest developments. He just wanted to see his friends. He came back later with the rest of the guys, and they all sat around and talked freely about the sabotage they had been doing, and their plans for the future.

They must have been sure of getting me to Sweden, otherwise they wouldn't have talked so openly. They did tell me that I couldn't talk about any of this in Sweden. I was scared that IF I should be apprehended, I knew too much. What if I was tortured, could I hold out? We discussed it but they weren't worried. The Germans would never get me. They would get me safely over the border to Sweden. Much to our amusement they told story after story of how they had fooled the Germans.

It became clearer to me after a few days how infiltrated these resistance workers were in the Nazi administration. They seemed to have a whole string of people from all walks of life working under cover at Victoria Terrace, the Gestapo Headquarters. The day after the doctor had been there, a barber came to give me a haircut. They all stood around and oh'd and ah'd for every lock that fell. But the barber was there to give me a man's haircut, and assured me that my locks would grow back again. It was amazing how much I looked like Sigurd after the haircut. It hurt to look at myself in the mirror.

In the meantime I didn't have any clothes to wear. Nell asked if my friends would give me any, but I told her nobody was as tall as I except Doris, and she was much thinner. Nell went to Doris' anyway, but she wasn't home, and Doris' mother was too afraid of the consequences to give out any of her clothing. Nell didn't like that, but I understood how her mother was feeling.

Nell then went to the hospital to pick up my clothes as if nothing had happened, and she got them. She even came back with my beloved robe. I was ecstatic to have my old friend back. Nell loved all this excitement. She said life at home was so dull. She was glad she had some real things to do instead of cooking and cleaning and waiting on a man. I understood that there was friction in the marriage, and was sad for them both.

When she saw how easy it was to get my clothes back from the hospital, her plans became more ambitious. She discussed with the group how they could get some of the valuables out from my home. I told them, "It's too dangerous. They have already sealed off our home. Don't put your lives on the line just for things. It isn't worth it."

The day after my hair was cut, a photographer came to take a passport photo. Nothing surprised me any more. Whenever they wanted a specialist for something, they got him. Then the false passport came, stolen right under the nose of a German with all stamps and signatures needed. That was how my false passport was created. You have seen it Jesse, remember? I was to become a laborer named Johan Johannesen, the name I signed on my false passport. If all other routes failed, Nils and I would take the train as close to the border as possible, get off the train and walk over the border to Sweden. That's how your Grandfather left Norway in the beginning of the war, but that is another story.

I would need a passport to get that close to the border. Nils and the others already had theirs, of course, they were using them constantly. The guys assured me that I never would have to use it. I was relieved, for anyone who saw my hands would notice in a second that I was no laborer. That worry was also eliminated when I was told that in case I had to use the passport, I would wear gloves, and I would never take them off

except when I was alone. They had thought of everything. No minor details were going to abort their carefully conceived plans.

I did not look away from the fact that it was very exciting to all of them that they were rescuing a pretty damsel in distress. Nils became my knight on a white horse. He took me on as his special responsibility, and it was obvious to everybody that we were a little taken with each other, and they teased us. It was all very innocent, but it helped me through those difficult times. They eventually told me that my father, Herman and Sigurd had been deported to Germany and were headed for Auschwitz in Poland. Rolle was still at the Berg Camp, because he was married to a non-Jew. The inhuman way the Jews were treated was discussed and condemned. As I told you before, the older boys were separated from their mothers, the women separated from the men, just like the madman in Iraq is doing to the hostages now. The prisoners had no food or water, but they still must have had hope, because they were singing their prayers and their Hebrew songs.

Nils was dropping by to see me as often as he could, and that was one thing I looked forward to. On the lighter side I was also informed that I was expected in Sweden by my Aunt Rose, and she was working on getting a special permission for me to go to Stockholm and stay there. I would stay with a friend of my

mother's whose husband and son had gone to America before the war to invest their money. She also had a daughter a few years older than I. It was amazing how the network functioned.

Jesse, darling, I will write more tomorrow.

Love, Grandma

September 13, 1990

Dear Jesse,

Finally we have some relief from the heat, and today is nice enough to sit outside. I know I shouldn't be talking to you about heat, as I am sure it is much hotter where you are.

I will always remember with pleasure the week I stayed in Lars' apartment, in spite of the sad times. In the back of my mind was the nagging thought of my family, but to brood was not helping them or me, and there was nothing I could do for them, not now, nor ever. I asked if there was a chance they could get word to Rolle about me, and the answer was yes.

Fortunately I was not moody. I could laugh and be interested in the Underground members and the tasks they were performing. Maybe that's why they liked me and did so much for me. They took pleasure in bringing me things because they wanted to impress me and show how clever they were. They did impress me! These were gloomy times, and all of us had to be optimistic to be able to survive. The men needed to get together and be merry to relieve the pressure they were under, and they were happy to use me as an excuse.

You know, Jesse, in our home we have a few nice things that came from my family home. Did you ever wonder how I got them since the Germans confiscated the properties of the Jews? Well, let me tell you: One day Nell walked back and forth, preoccupied, asking me if I had any dresses or shoes, if I had any more clothes than those she had brought from the hospital. I had been in my robe since I got there. I tried to make a joke about it asking if she was tired of seeing me in the robe, but she was not in a joking mood. "You will need clothes, " she said and asked again if I couldn't think of anywhere I could get some clothes. I just shook my head. "I'll buy some in Sweden," I answered. "I have enough to get there."

She didn't say more about it, but later in the day she said she had some errands to do and I would have to take care of myself for a while. She wouldn't be long, and I knew what to do, not answer the telephone, not open the door, etc. I was surprised she would let me be there by myself. It was not according to the plan.

Nell was gone for several hours, and none of the guys came to see me. I felt lonely but reasoned that they must have had other business to fulfill. I was just one of many people with whom they were involved. I had been lucky to have had such unusually good care.

Late in the afternoon I heard a group of people running up the stair, and for a moment I was petrified. But then I heard talking and laughing and recognized my friends' voices. They came in carrying suitcases and boxes, and when the first amazement was over, I discovered that the objects were familiar: clothes, books, silver and china - all from my home. Nell had not been able to locate any clothes for me, and when she drove by our apartment she got the idea that they should raid it before the Nazis did. "But the apartment is sealed," I gasped. She laughed, "Not any more." She had conferred with the group, and they all thought the idea was terrific. They "borrowed" a truck, parked it in the middle of the street, and walked up with boxes and suitcases, confident they would succeed. They broke the lock and seal on the door and threw as much as they could get into the containers they had brought. "We couldn't get it all, of course", Nell said., "We didn't have time. But we got all your clothes, most of your books and the hammered copper table with the trolls that you told me about."

"Nobody stopped you? Nobody asked questions?" I wanted to know.

"People probably thought the Nazis raided your apartment," Nell laughed. "You know, if you are going to do something criminal, do it openly, preferably in a crowd in the light of the day. I never knew it was so easy to break into a strange house and take what is there. Maybe I will start a new profession."

This brought on general amusement and called for a celebration. They decided that everybody needed a party, their wives, their girl friends, they themselves, and I needed to meet everybody in their group and their partners. The party was planned for that same evening.

They discussed how to store my things until the war was over, who would take what, and then they divided the items according to space and safety. When I came back, I would at least have some familiar things to start my new life. They acted like it was only a game of "How could they best fool the Germans." In reality my friends were putting their lives in danger by the chances they took. I was grateful for all they did for me but dismayed at the unnecessary chances they took. I didn't want to be the cause of ill fortune or loss of life for any of them. I knew they wanted to impress me, but I already thought of them as heroes, and no heroic acts were called for. It would be good to be out of there as soon as possible, although I cringed at the thought of leaving my new friends.

The recognition of having fooled the Nazis put them in a great mood for a celebration, and it also became a farewell party for me. There was an abundance of good food and drinks. Everyone but Nils had brought their partners. The drinks and food disappeared while they sang and danced. I was sitting by Nils with my hand in his and laughed at their foolishness

enjoying the whole scene. My heroes were just ordinary people who made fools of themselves when they had too much to drink, like everybody else. Since one in the group had to be sober, Nils was selected. They kept on far in the night, and when they finally were ready to go home, Harry demanded that Nell go with him. Lars went home with his girl friend, and that left Nils and me alone. It could have been awkward, but Nils ordered me to bed to get some rest, and he took Nell's place on the sofa. When I woke in the morning he was gone and Nell was back. Later in life that episode became a romantic memory.

In the afternoon Nell got a phone call from Nils. He told her to take the dog for a walk. Nell hurried in to me and told me to dress warmly because we were going for a walk. I was excited and a little scared. I hadn't been outside since the day I came from the hospital, and I still didn't feel strong. Lars' girl friend was there, and she and Nell helped me down the stairs. I felt a little wobbly, but the cold air on my face revived me. When we heard the German boots marching, clamp, clamp, clamp, I tensed up, but the dark was my friend, and when we came to a street light, I turned my face down. We walked for about a half hour before I said I was tired and wanted to go back. My knees were weak, and the two women almost had to drag me up the stairs.

When we came back Nils, Finn and Lars were there. "Why did you want me out of the house?" I asked. "I didn't," he answered. "I only thought it would be best for you to walk a little, because you are leaving tonight, and you will have to walk quite a bit when you get to the border."

That was big news. I was anxious to get going, but also afraid of the unknown. We were all busy deciding what I should take with me, how I should dress. At last I was dressed in men's clothing and a cap, and packed a small suitcase with THE ROBE, a couple of dresses and some underwear, a thin coat and a book. I would have to carry the suitcase myself, and it couldn't be too heavy, for I was in no shape to carry anything but myself. When I asked if Nils was going with me, he shook his head, and I felt sad. So this was farewell again. There had been a lot of farewells lately.

Nils explained to me what was going to happen. I would be taken in an ambulance to one place. There a police car would be waiting to take me to another place. Then a German private car would take me out to a place in the country where I would meet other people who also were going to escape. We would all be taken in a cattletruck and driven as close to the border as possible, and from there we would have to walk until we crossed the Swedish border.

I looked at Nils a long time, and he looked at me.

"I promise you will make it", he said as if he were reading my thoughts. "Sure," I said, "I'll make it," but I didn't feel convinced. If Nils had gone with me to the border, my sentiments would have been different. I knew him and trusted him, but I didn't know the other people, and I had already had one bad experience. I was apprehensive and uneasy.

"Don't let any of them talk you out of your money," he said. "You will need everything you have when you come to Sweden. You can exchange your money there. You are not to pay any money for this. It is all volunteer work."

"Will they ask for money?" I wanted to know.

"There is always one or another who wants to benefit from this. Just don't give any of your money away."

I had a few thousand kroner in my purse, left from the day I withdrew the money from the bank, and though the hospital had taken my clothes away, nobody had touched my purse. We thought it best that I sew the money in my underclothes, for that way nobody could take it away from me or talk me into giving it away. It proved to be a sound precaution.

It was early December 1942. I don't exactly remember the date. I probably didn't know then what date it was. For a long time one day had been the same as the other. It is dark early in Norway in December, and I was to be picked up as soon as it was dark enough to be safe. Nils was there until a stranger came to pick me up, and I remember I felt pretty lost. It was hard to say goodbye to Nell too; she cried, I didn't. Sometimes the events are so overwhelming that you can't cry. Your feelings are frozen, put on hold, to appear later when you can better handle them. You, Jesse, must have had some of the same feelings when you were shipped off to the Persian Gulf, didn't you?

I have no real sense of what happened next, only that I was silently herded into a car, then into a house where I waited, then into another car and another house. The waiting time there longer. Finally the last car arrived. The ride was quite long. All the cars had two men, different ones for every car, and I was the only passenger. I didn't know any of them. Nobody talked. When we finally arrived at our destination, I was put in a large room where several other people were waiting. I found a place to sit down. Eyes followed every move I made. The quiet felt thunderous, the tension heavy. Once there was a whisper. Nobody seemed to belong to or know any other. I was the last to arrive.

Suddenly a man was in the room. "If anybody has any money," he started, "we ask that you leave it here since it will do you no good in Sweden, and we can use it here to defray the costs." If Nils hadn't told me to hold on to my money, I would have given him all I had, but since I couldn't get to it, I kept quiet. Some money exchanged hands. I didn't pay any attention to what else was going on. I was suddenly overcome with hopelessness. The waiting time had finally invaded my tranquility.

There was a window in the room, and I could see that snow had started to fall, steadily and quietly. A man appeared and told us to go outside. From there we were herded onto a cattletruck where we were told to sit with our knees up and use as little space as possible and to be utterly quiet. I went in first which meant that I was in the back.

I don't know how long we sat there, I felt my feet getting colder and colder, until they were numb. Not one cough was heard, nor one whisper. We sat as if we did not exist. The snow kept falling and falling. I couldn't see it, but heard someone outside complain about it. The driver opened the canvas and stuck his head in. "We are waiting until it stops snowing," he said. Hours went by. I am sure we were all numb, but nobody dared to complain or even talk.

It was while I sat squeezed like a sardine and getting colder and colder that I realized what I was up against, what a destiny awaited us all in this disastrous snowstorm. But it turned out I was the only casualty. I heard a whisper: "What is holding us up?" and then muddled voices from the outside. My name was mentioned. "She'll never make it. It's snowing too hard. She isn't strong enough. We can't risk it."

They are going to leave me behind, I was thinking. But they can't do that, I'll make it, I am sure I can make it, Oh, please, please, don't let them do that to me.

The driver stuck his head in again and said: "Miss Dickman, will you please come out." I struggled to my feet and stumbled over bodies as I made my way to the front of the truck. Hands helped me down. I was numb from the cramped position in which I had been sitting for several hours, and I fell to the ground on the snow. Soft snow was falling steadily and quietly. "You'll never be able to make it in this weather," the driver explained softly. "We are sorry, but we can't take the chance." A woman's shrill voice was heard, "She can't stay here, it's enough that we have people here at night. During the day it's too dangerous. We can expect patrol any time." "What shall I do?" I whispered. "The farmer will let you stay the night, and somebody will come for you tomorrow."

I was transferred to an outhouse in the back. The driver whispered: "Someone will come tomorrow and pick you up." I didn't believe him. This is it, I thought.

Next chapter is coming up soon, my darling. I must get this story over with so that I can start writing about lighter parts of my life. There is much to tell. I have been living a long time, and have had many experiences.

Love, Grandma

September 14, 1990

Dearest Jesse,

We picked up the Volvo today and I drove it for the first time. Come home and drive it, big guy. By the way, I have written so much lately that the little finger on my left hand has started to ache. You get that way when you have had too many birthdays.

The last letter stopped when I was left behind in a little shed. There was a cot in it, and a rickety table and chair. An old washstand with a tin washbowl and pitcher on top stood in the corner. The farmer's wife came and made a bed for me on the cot. She was not unfriendly, just scared, and let me know that it was an imposition for me to be there. They only let me stay the night because they had no other choice. They didn't know what to do with me. Before she left she said she would be back in the morning with water and food.

The truck had left, the men had gone. I was alone and lonely, wondering about life and death, God and man, and the purpose and meaning of it all. Suddenly I sat up! I saw shadows, I heard noises, and was slowly making out where they

came from. Rats! Hungry rats, looking for something to eat. Visions of rats sucking blood from sleeping peoples throats kept me awake and huddled on the cot with the blanket drawn closely around.

The night was long. Would Nils come back for me? He had been so extra nice, or had he forgotten me already? Would I have to find my way alone across the border to Sweden? If I were caught, would I be able to keep quiet about my knowledge of the Resistance workers? What if I were tortured? My friends had been so sure that I would arrive safely in Sweden that they had not been careful about their Underground activities. I knew too much about their sabotage plans and their everyday use of police cars, stolen passports, official stamps, etc. I tried to assure myself that they would see me safely in Sweden, if for nothing else but their own necks, but solace was hard to come by.

I had taken pills to keep me awake, and they worked. I sat on the cot with my clothes and big boots on. I dared not take them off. It was pitch dark, and quiet. The only noise I heard was the rats gnawing. I had always been afraid of the dark and this time I had a real reason - the rats. Every different noise made me shudder. I must have dozed off a little towards the morning because the blanket had fallen down, and I was cold. Easily that was the worst night of my entire life.

The woman came back when light was showing around the blackout shades. She brought some soap and water and a towel and told me to freshen up a bit. I did and felt a little better. She came back, this time bringing bread, a little piece of cheese and coffee substitute. She exchanged it for the soiled water. I hardly touched the food, although I was hungry. Food was scarce, and every little bite of food constituted a hardship on those who gave it up. The people didn't want me there. I couldn't take their food. I still had a little bit of pride left.

When she came back for the tray, I had worked up some courage to ask when I would be picked up again. "I don't know, but they better come. You can't stay here, it is dangerous for all of us." I was sorry I had asked. Silence was better than the brutality of the words. But she was scared. She was trapped too. In their desire to help people escape they had not realized the consequences until this moment, when the scheme hadn't worked according to their plans.

Daylight seeped in. It must have been around 9 o'clock. The windows were covered with black paper, but enough daylight came through to make the light from the single lamp in the ceiling fade out. I turned off the light. The room became almost dark, but I liked it better that way. I peeked out the window to keep in contact with the outside world. Once in a while I could see a figure hurrying across the grounds. I heard

voices, and once a car drove up. I felt my heart beating faster. Could it be Nils? But it wasn't.

The hours went by. Once again the woman came with food. "I hope somebody will come for you soon," she said. "Nobody must know that you are here. It is dangerous." Since I had nothing to say, I just nodded. This time I didn't touch the food. I sat in the chair to show whoever came for me that I was strong. I tried to sit without thinking. It didn't work. I tried to make up nice stories about things that would happen to me. It didn't work. I tried to envision myself in a concentration camp and all the horror. Fortunately, that didn't work either.

It became dark outside, and I knew it must be around 4 o'clock in the afternoon. I didn't turn on the light. The dusk closed in on me with velvet softness. The darkness was good: it sheltered, it hid. Hours went. I heard nothing, I saw nothing. My mind was empty. I wanted to go out in the snow and lie down, to softly, quietly extend the darkness forever.

Suddenly the light was on, and Nils was in the room. I threw my arms around his neck and started to cry. He let me cry for a while, and then he gave me a chocolate bar and told me to eat it. "Come," he said, "we will have to get out of here." "Where are we going?" He shook his head a little and told me he really did not know. We couldn't go back to Lars', for

something had come up that made it too dangerous. One of the fellows in their group had been forced to flee to Sweden. The others had to lay low for a while.

In the car he said he would take me to his parents' place for the night and would find another place tomorrow. He made excuses for his parents' modest place. It had only an outhouse in the back yard for a john, no running water, and just a sofa in the parlor for me to sleep on. I was more concerned about the danger I put them all in, but he assured me that for one night it would be O.K. as long as I went to the john only when it was dark.

His parents were common folks. They looked at me as if I came from another world. They had never seen a Jew before. They were just sitting down to dinner and asked us to join them. There were four of them at the table, his father, mother, sister and brother. I hardly dared raise my eyes to look at them, and I never got an impression of what they looked like. They passed the food around, and I took a very small portion. They assured me that I was not eating pork, and I only smiled and tried to take a bite of the food. I wasn't hungry.

With dinner out of the way, Nils disappeared after showing me where I was to sleep and assuring me that he would be back the next day when dark had set in. I offered to do the dinner

dishes, and wished I never had. Isn't it funny, how a small thing like doing the dishes sits in my mind after 48 years, but other vital things made no impression on me. How I hated doing the dishes! I had never done dishes in my entire life, Jesse, and didn't know the first thing about it. And there was no running water. I had to heat water, then go down four stairs to get more water. The worst thing was to stick my hands in that greasy water. I almost gagged. I realized then and there how spoiled and protected I had been, and chided myself. But I still choked over that disagreeable dish water.

I stayed with them for two days. Nils came for a few minutes only to say that he couldn't take me away before the following day. He gave me another chocolate bar which I ate hungrily. The remaining time I sat in the parlor they had given over to me and read. I don't think I spoke ten words with anybody. None of us knew what to say to the other. I heard them talking about me and how dangerous it was to have me there, and my self esteem plummeted again. I ate little and offered to do the dishes again, but this time his sister said she would do them.

It was a difficult waiting period, but there was nothing I could do. At least I knew Nils was in the picture and he would take care of me. In the evening he came back with Nell to pick me up. I left some money on the table and hoped his folks

wouldn't think ill of me for doing that. I knew from their conversation that they needed it, but they may have resented that I had any money at all. It probably reassured their belief that all Jews were rich.

Nell explained that I would be staying with Harry's sister Marcelle until I was strong enough to take the trip. I had met Marcelle before, when I had been with Kari, and I was happy to be staying with friends. I was concerned about their safety, of course, but it was an ideal place for me to stay. They lived in the country and had no neighbors. As long as I kept myself invisible, everything would be fine.

I stayed there a few days without seeing any of the people I had stayed with before. Marcelle was the only one I saw during the day, and her husband joined us in the evening. Marcelle was happy to have me there. I was company and gave her someone to talk to. Marcelle was one of the most mild and sweet women I had ever met. She never let me know that I was a bother or that it was dangerous for me to be there. She made me feel like a human being again.

Marcelle and I were having coffee in the kitchen when suddenly we heard steps outside the house. We jumped up because we didn't expect anybody. I ran silently up to the attic, and Marcelle opened the door. It was Nils and Nell who came to take

me away. I was to stay with Nell and Harry for a couple of days, since it would be easier to get to me when the time came for me to leave. I was happy to see them again for they were old friends now.

Nell and Nils had come by bus to pick me up. We ordered a taxi to take us to Nell's home. We let Nils out on the way. When we arrived at Nell's house I grabbed my suitcase and we ran upstairs to the apartment. As soon as we were inside, I froze. "I forgot my purse in the taxi," I whispered. Nell looked dumbfounded, and then she set to work. She called the taxi company and told them that her country cousin, who was a hick, had forgotten her purse with all her money in the taxi, and asked could she get it back. It took some time to locate the taxi driver, but we did, and he came up to us with the purse. Nell gave him some money, and as soon as he had gone, we laughed hysterically, to lessen the tension. That mistake could have been fatal. If the taxi driver had been a Nazi sympathizer and had looked in the purse, he would have found my false passport, other papers I had saved, and all would have been over.

That afternoon Harry called Nell and told her that he would be bringing the gang over for dinner, and they would have a party. Nell had a basement full of preserved foods that she had been putting up herself, and the fellows brought the liquor. It became another silly party. In the middle of the party, there

was a hard knock on the door. Everyone became sober in a second. Nils drew me in into the dining room, and told Nell to take whoever was knocking into the living room and close the door, so that we could escape down the hall and out.

It was the night watchman who very angrily told Nell that we had forgotten to black out. We all felt very stupid. It could have been the police! The party mood was gone, and we decided that I must leave the next day. We were all getting too lax, and that was dangerous.

And so it was. The next day Nils drove me out to another place close to the border where I again waited with other people. But this time it didn't snow, and I felt much stronger. In fact I felt like a veteran.

More in a few days. I love you.

Love, Grandma

September 18, 1990

My darling Jesse,

Two letters came from you, dated Aug. 21 and Sept. 8. Your yearnings for the summers you spent with us in California almost made me cry. Good memories nobody can take away from you, and they can help you over difficult times. Reminiscences from my childhood came to mind, where summers in the country were the happiest times of my life. One day I will write you about that.

You ask what it was like to be married to a serviceman. I was married only two days when your grandfather left for England, and I didn't see him again before the war was over. I will write you all about it in due time. You will also know the circumstances which made us leave our own country and travel to the United States only three weeks before your father was born. It was a folly, even if everything turned out O.K. in the end. Since you are so far away, writing to you as often as I do makes me feel closer to you. Such the letters have a purpose. They make us both feel good.

Let me get on with my story. It is amazing how forgotten memories come to life again under strange circumstances. Many years ago - I could not have been more than 16 or 17 years old - I hopped on a street car, and there was an elderly man who had forgotten his money and couldn't pay for his fare when the conductor came to collect. I offered to pay his way, and he accepted and asked for my name and address so that he could send me the money back. I told him not to worry about it, but he got very indignant and almost shouted: "Do you not know who I am? I am BJØRN BJØRSON! I was stunned, I hadn't known what he looked liked, but I certainly knew his name. It appeared in the papers constantly, because he was a famous actor and also the Director for the National Theater. But what was more - he was the son of Norway's greatest poet and patriot, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, who wrote our national anthem. I couldn't remember a time when I had not known his name and poems. I was awed! Here was little me paying for his son's fare and him insisting that I give him my name and address. Before we could find a pen and paper the streetcar stopped at the my station, and confused as I was I jumped off. It never occurred to me before it was too late that I should have stayed on the streetcar as long as it took, because he might have sent a signed photograph instead of 2 cents for the streetcar fare. He is long dead now.

And why does this little *EPISODE* have a place in my story of escape? Let me tell you. Nils drove me directly out to the

place where a number of refugees were waiting, and we said our goodbyes. I was not in the greatest spirit when I went in and sat down on an empty seat. Beside me sat a beautiful grayhaired woman, and she started to talk to me. She couldn't understand why she had to leave Norway just because her grandfather had been Jewish. She didn't believe she would be in any danger, since she was the wife of BJØRN BJØRNSON. I sat up straight and listened with more care. She went on to say that the Underground didn't want to take any chances, and her friends advised her to go, so here she was.

I told her about meeting her husband, and we both got a good laugh. She showed me a little flask with liquor and said, "You can have a draught of this if you get tired when we walk. It will be the payment for my husband's fare." I laughed and thanked her, and so it was that I had the pleasure of her delightful company on my escape route to Sweden.

The experiences this time around was quite different from the first time I tried to escape. The atmosphere seemed more relaxed. Perhaps I was not so tense, or maybe it was the pleasant company with me. But little did we know how close to disaster we had been. I didn't hear about this until a year later in Stockholm, when I met Nils again, and he told me the story. We had all been told that if the truck should stop for some reason, we would have to be absolutely quiet, no

coughing, sneezing, whispering, moving or breathing - if we had to breathe it would have to be soundless.

We did stop, and we did hear voices but could not make out what was happening. Everything went so fast that we didn't even know we were in danger. According to Nils we had been stopped by a German car, and the driver of our truck was asked if he had seen a car with Jews who were trying to escape to Sweden. "Yes," the driver had answered, "they went that way". And he pointed in the opposite direction. The Germans were in such a hurry that they took off immediately, without bothering looking into a cattletruck that was driving close to the Swedish border at midnight. I am glad I didn't know this was happening. The situation was tense enough as it was. When I asked Nils what would have happened had they looked inside, he answered that the driver would have shot his way through.

When we came to the border, we all got out. My feet were cold, and I had to jump up and down a little to get feeling back in my toes. This was a wooded area, and the trees had been cut 'to make a wide street, which was the border between Norway and Sweden. We were told again to be absolutely quiet. We were not safe until we were on the other side of the street. It was a fairly long walk, and it went slowly, because everybody had luggage to carry. I stopped once and put down my little suitcase. Mrs. Bjørnsen took out a little flask and motioned

to me to take a drink. I did, and she took one herself. She then took my suitcase, and off we went again. It was scary, it was tense, it was tiring, but we made it. When we were on the Swedish side we were met by a couple of Swedish soldiers who had expected us, and we were safe.

I thanked Mrs. Bjørnsen for the drink and for carrying my bag, and she repeated that it was the payment for her husbands fare, and we had a good laugh again. I never saw the dear lady again, but I never will forget her.

The soldiers had also been told about me and that I needed special care. I got it! The two soldiers wanted to carry me, but that I would not allow. However, when we came to the barracks, the soldiers in one barrack were asked to let me have a bunk, and they all offered. I was glad to lie down. Someone took my boots off, put a blanket over me and left me alone. I was safe, I was free.

The next morning I was treated like a celebrity. A group of soldiers, who wanted to do things for me, were around me all the time. I was told that I would take the train to Stockholm the next day where my aunt would meet me. I don't know what happened to my fellow travellers. I saw them at meal time, but as far as I know I was the only one going to Stockholm. I looked for Mrs. Bjørnson, but she wasn't there. We were all treated

exceptionally well and given food we hadn't seen for years. We could drink all the milk we wanted, and I will never forget the first full glass of cold milk I drank. It tasted better even than I remembered. When asked if there was something special I wanted to eat, I said, "Bananas," and I had bananas. I tasted Swedish Limpa for the first time, real rye bread without substitutions, and to this day that is my favorite bread. One of the first things I did in Sweden last Summer was to buy Swedish Limpa to take with me to Norway.

The following morning we had to register, but first we had to see a doctor. After all, this was a refugee camp, and it was important that we not bring any sicknesses into the host country. We were told to get in two lines, one for men and one for women. I was asked to wait in the men's line and had a hard time explaining to the nurse that I wasn't a man. I was dressed in knickers and sweaters and a cap, and my hair was cut like a man. No wonder there was confusion. And the confusion continued when I came into the doctor's office and he told me to undress. When he examined me, he exclaimed:

"But you are a woman!" I thought the nurse had told him, and only nodded, too embarrassed to answer. But we ended up laughing at the incident.

It was a privilege to be able to go directly to Stockholm. Not many refugees could do that, though almost everyone I talked

to wanted Stockholm as their destination. I am sure Tante Rose had made life so miserable for the bureaucrats in the Interior Department, that they gave in just to get rid of her. I will have to tell you about her in a letter by itself. She was a character and I loved her dearly, although she was full of intrigue and made evebody's lives discordant, including mine.

In the next letter I will talk about Stockholm and how I met your Grandfather, if there isn't anything else you want to know about the war in Norway. There are still a few wartime episodes I will write you, one about the day the war started, and one about the panic in the city. You know, when I write you, it is as if I write about another person. I was another person at that time. After all, 50 years are bound to change anyone. Sometimes it only takes a few months to turn your life around, isn't that right, Jesse Poe?

Just think how many hugs you owe me when I see you. I mean to collect. Grandpa sent you a letter and some newspapers. Tell me if you get all the mail.

Love you more than you can imagine.

Grandma

BOOK TWO

The Refugee Time in Stockholm

Stockholm December 1942

It was the middle of December when I arrived in Stockholm. I dreaded the scene with Aunt Rose that I knew was awaiting me. She tended to be over-emotional in insignificant situations, and seeing me for the first time since my family's arrest was bound to be difficult. But I was wrong about her this time; she was so glad to see me that she forgot to be hysterical. I was surprised to see the usual elegant Rose wearing an ugly long black heavy coat, and I told her so. She laughed.

"I got this from the Norwegian Legation when I came, and Kalle hates it."

"Where is he, and why do you wear it when he hates it?" I asked.

"He is in the military in North Sweden, but he comes home almost every week-end. And I wear this so that he will buy me a fur coat. He will, just wait and see."

I didn't doubt her words. She always got her way.

I was to stay with an old schoolfriend of my mother's, and Aunt Rose took me directly there. The friend was a widow and lived with her daughter Ida in a large expensive flat in the better district of Stockholm. Her husband and son had gone to America right before the war to invest their money and had not been able to get back again before the war started. Her husband

had died over there, and now she was afraid that her son would never come back. She was also scared for their investment. She didn't think her son could handle it by himself, and she thought she would never see the money again either. I learned, however, that the son did come back after the war, and had done well. She didn't trust him though. She didn't trust anybody.

Not that they needed the money. They owned a beautiful store, where they sold expensive and authentic antiques. Their flat was furnished with only the best in furniture, tables and chairs from Louis XIV times; lamps and beautiful pieces of art from old China, etc. To me it wasn't livable. It looked so fragile that I was afraid to sit down in case I would break a chair, and I never touched a thing so that it wouldn't accidentally slip from my hands. I had been warned to be careful and I was. Fortunately I was not expected to help in the house. A housekeeper came in every day except Sundays, and because she didn't live in, I got her room.

While the house was filled with elegant furniture, my room had a bed, a cheap dresser, and a chair. In the room was a sink with hot and cold water. My room almost looked like a cell, without toilet. The window, with a view of the back of another building, had a short curtain and a roller shade made of paper. The flat had a half bath down the hall, and a full bathroom by the bedrooms at the other end of the building. I was allowed to

use the toilet in the hall, but not the family bathroom to take a bath or shower. In the beginning I was a little confused about what was expected of me. I suppose it was nice of her to take me in, but the lady of the house certainly didn't make me feel welcome. I felt like one of the refugees I had read so much about.

Ida, on the other hand, liked to have me there. She was about 30 years old, had never married or had a boy friend. She wasn't pretty, but rather heavy-set with a bulky face. However she had other attributes. She was fun to be with, she read books, she liked to go to concerts, and, in fact, took me to my first symphony concert. She was a friend to me. But Ida was painfully afraid of her mother, and never did anything that her mother didn't approve of. She had no salary for working in the antique store, only pocket money, and very little of that.

I was glad I had my own money. I was allowed to exchange 300 kroner a month, a lot of money in those days, enough to exist for a month. Since I didn't pay for room and board, I was in a pretty good shape. I offered to pay for my keep, but Tant, as I called her, said I would need the money when I lived by myself. That was a clue that she didn't want me there forever, but I didn't know how long I should stay without seeming to be ungrateful. To follow form was very important in those days, and

to break away from it was difficult. I hated to be dependent upon others. It always has been and still is that way for me.

I used the days to familiarize myself with Stockholm. Sweden had left-hand driving then, and it could be confusing. I used a map and streetcars and soon knew the layout of the city. I remember one of the first things I did was go to the movies by myself to see *Gone with the Wind*, which had just arrived in the city. I had already read the book in Norwegian translation, and was eager to see what the movie was like. I was not disappointed. It was a long movie, and I enjoyed every minute of it. When I came home, the house was in uproar, my Aunt Rose was visiting and scared out of her mind that something had happened to me. I had told my hosts where I was going and couldn't understand their concern, but they had all been afraid that I had been lost.

Aunt Rose wanted me to visit her or call her every day, and I was glad to have a place where I could be myself. She lived in a tiny apartment, and there was no room for me to sleep there, otherwise I would have stayed with her. She made a fuss over my coat saying it was not heavy enough and I would freeze to death. She was very upset that Tant and Ida did not lend me a coat since they had a closetful. One evening when Aunt Rose was visiting us, she couldn't hold her tongue any longer.

"Ida, don't you have a coat to lend Tulla, the poor girl is freezing to death, and you have so many of them?"

Ida was willing and said so, but looked at her mother, who said:

"The brown coat should fit her, let her use that until she gets her own."

The brown coat was the same style as Aunt Rose's and looked horrible on me, but Tant said it fit perfectly. I used it because Stockholm was very windy and sour cold, and it would take me some time to save enough to get a decent coat. One thing I can say for the coat, it made for many a merry hour for Aunt Rose and me. She made such fun of Tant and was so good at it that I laughed until I cried sometimes. I must say the coat was warm, and for that I was grateful.

It didn't take long before I realized what was expected of me. Every evening after dinner Tant wanted to play Canasta and I was the partner. Ida was only too glad to get rid of that job. She escaped into her own room to read a book, while I took over her old duties. I never liked to play cards, except bridge, but here I had to sit hour after hour and play. I was bored into indifference and let Tant win all the games. She liked to win and was satisfied with her partner. Every time I talked to her I would have to say, "Does Tant want this, or does Tant want that?" In Sweden in those days the formality was expected. Even Ida had to ask, "Is this the way Mother wants it?" Talking directly to an older person wasn't done.

In my home we had never celebrated Christmas and I was therefore surprised that they did in Tant's home. After all it was a Jewish home, but they still served ham. And they exchanged presents, something I hadn't thought of and since nobody had warned me, I had no presents for anybody. I don't remember what I received. I was too embarrassed that I had nothing for any of them. Uncle Karl and Aunt Rose were there for dinner, and we had a merry time. It is difficult not to have fun when Rose is around. And she was so happy to have her husband back that her mimic and fuss over him were so extraordinary that we thought we were in the theater. Even Tant had a merry time.

Rose was my mother's youngest sister and had been a beautiful girl in her youth, so beautiful that when the German director Karl Gerhardt was in Norway before the war and saw her, he had wanted her in a movie. But her mother wouldn't hear of it. Rose hated her ever after, and was never nice to her. After Grandmother died when I was ten and Rose 24, Rose came to live with us for a while. She made my life miserable at times with mimicking me and making fun of my big feet and tall status, but she always made me laugh even then. I envied her looks and wished that I was half as pretty.

She was still attractive at 38, though a little too heavy. Her legs were long and slender like a race horse, her eyes large and dark brown, shadowed with long black eyelashes. She was 38

but would only admit to 36, since that was Karl's age, and she had lied about her age when she met him. She took the lie with her to the grave, because she had falsified all her papers.

Rose was a difficult human being. She would make friends with someone and give that person presents and extreme attention, and then all of a sudden she never wanted to see him or her again. She rid herself of all old friends in the same manner. Rolle thinks she was mean, but I think she was more than that. She was lovable, funny, generous and intelligent. She made fun of people cruelly, and hit on their weak sides with the precision of a cartoonist. She would act out every story she was told, every weakness she could find, every barb she drove in, much to my amusement. I loved her because she made me laugh when I needed it the most. After my mother died, and my father was on the road, she invited me to come to her house every day for dinner, and she made me laugh. In Sweden she did the same thing, and the laughter made me feel better. I always ate when I was at Aunt Rose's, to keep the peace, with the result that I barely touched the food when I sat down to dinner with Tant and Ida. They made much ado because I ate so little, but that didn't keep Tant from taking all my rationing cards. I would have preferred Rose to have some of them, and I could have used some myself once in a while, but I didn't even dare to ask. Sometimes I wanted to buy some bakery goods to bring my aunt, but I never could.

Uncle Karl came home often. He was handsome and friendly, a little on the naive side, not really intelligent. He had made a reasonably good living as a salesman in Norway up to the Summer of 1942, when both he and Rose escaped to Sweden. He and I had always been friends. He was kind to me and liked having me around. When I visited, he and Rose put on a show for me to make me laugh, and they always succeeded. Rose hovered over him, told him what to wear, what and when to eat, what he could and could not do. If he wished for something, she had it for him immediately. He was the child that she never had, and he behaved exactly like a spoiled child. I believe their sex life was non-existent and all the theatrics was sublimation. Her main interest in life was to keep Kalle happy. She must have been afraid of losing him even then. She knew, of course, that their relationship wasn't normal.

With the Holidays over, I enrolled in school to learn shorthand. I knew I had to get a job sooner or later, and I wanted it sooner. Before I could work, I had to get a work permit, and one of Tant's relatives who had connections in the State Department took me up to see one of the top people in the department. The official was extremely pleasant to me, and I got my permit without problems. If I ever needed him I could call on him any time, he assured me. At the end of the war I saw his picture in the papers and read to my horror that he had been arrested for being a German spy.

CHAPTER TWO

I had been in Stockholm two months when I learned of the Norwegian Club. It was open from 12 noon until 10 pm every day and had been established so that the penniless refugees had a place to go instead of walking the streets or sitting in their dismal rented rooms, while they were waiting either for a job opening, or for being sent to England to join the Norwegian Army. At the Club they could meet other Norwegians, read, or play cards, and it was a popular spot for many lonely souls. The Club was supported by the Norwegian Government in England.

When the Germans invaded Norway. King Haakon VII and the whole Government had fled by boat to England, and had taken with them Norway's gold reserve. The Government had established itself in England and the Norwegian Army in Scotland, which was largely made up of seamen, Norwegians living abroad wanting to fight Germany, and refugees who had fled Norway during and after the invasion. The Norwegian Merchant Navy was at the time the largest in the world according to population, and third in the world according to size, smaller only to the Japanese and English. The fleet was out to sea by the time of the invasion, and was used by the Allies for transport during the war, which again helped support the refugees and the Government.

Dora was a friend of my Aunt's, or as Dora said a former friend, because Rose didn't want to see her any more for reasons unknown to Dora. One day I met her on the street on her way to the Norwegian Club, and she asked me to come along. I was more than happy to go. I longed for the lighter times with my old Norwegian friends; I found the Swedish people too formal and serious. Norwegians and Swedes didn't like each other much. Sweden had managed to stay neutral during the war, which turned out to be a blessing for the Norwegian refugees in the end, but they bitterly resented that Sweden permitted Germany to transport troops and weapons through their country to Norway. The animosity between them had lasted since 1814 when Norway had been in an unequal union with Sweden. The two countries had the same King, but Norway had its own Parliament and Constitution. What the Norwegians didn't have was their own State Department, and they were required to show the Swedish Crown in the corner of their beautiful flag.

in 1905 Norway had a quiet revolution and seceded from Sweden without a shot being fired, for which the Norwegians are very proud. Prince Carl from Denmark, the youngest son of the reigning Danish King, was selected to be King of Norway, but he had refused to be King before the people had voted and elected him. That was one of the reasons he was so popular. He took the name of Haakon VII after he became King. His behavior was also very friendly and polite; he was often seen walking down

Karl-Johan (Oslo's main street), returning greetings cordially when he was recognized. His deceased wife, who was the sister of Lord Mountbatten, used to do her own shopping in the city's largest Department Store, Steen & Strøm. The King and his family behaved like commoners and the people loved them for it. I remember my Mother coming home one day all excited because she had seen the Queen in the store.

At the time I met Dora, I had just come from my class in shorthand, and was on my way home to study. When Dora asked me to come along, I thought I could just as well do my studying at the Norwegian Club. When we arrived Dora only stayed a few minutes to talk, and then she left. Only a few people were there. I noticed a young fair-haired boy on the other side of the room playing with a little snot-nosed kid. He combed the little boy's hair and wiped his nose, and I remember thinking how nice of him to take care of his younger brother. He was too young to be the child's father. Since it was hard to study shorthand in a language with which you are not familiar, I was absorbed in my work and didn't notice that the young man was sitting beside me on the sofa until he remarked, "It must be interesting work you are doing." I laughed and explained that it wasn't interesting at all, just boring and difficult. I studied him a little more and saw that he looked very thin and was shabbily dressed, but he had a strong face and bright blue eyes. With a little more flesh on his bones and better clothes, he would be quite handsome. I buried myself in my work again.

Suddenly the young man sprang up and said, "Excuse me, I haven't introduced myself, I am Kristian Gippo. I answered: "It is nice to meet you, I am Elsa Dickman." We shook hands, and thus I met one half of my destiny.

It turned out that the little boy was not his brother. He was just a neglected little boy that Kris felt he had to take care of. I looked at my watch and said I had to go, I was late. He said he would walk me home. By then he had already invited me to the opera the next day, and I was so glad to have something better to do than playing cards with Tant that I accepted. I had learned that Kris was an actor, unemployed at the moment, but had worked in the last opera as an extra in the ballet, and that he got tickets free whenever he wanted. He was waiting for a new job at the Dramatiska Theatern to start in another week. He explained that he couldn't get employment as an actor as long as there were Swedish actors who could play the roles, so he was only hired as an extra. But he didn't seem to mind. He was waiting to be sent to England, the reason he had escaped to Sweden; and since he had a place to sleep, tickets to eat at a cooking school, and free tickets to opera and plays, he needed nothing more at the moment.

I was late in coming home and Tant and Ida had already started dinner. I excused myself for being late, and dared not look up or say a word during dinner. I hardly touched the food,

I was too excited and hadn't the slightest clue of how I was going to explain to Tant about Kristian. I haltingly did when we were playing cards, and Tant was none too pleased. "An unemployed actor, a non-Jewish refugee, what was I thinking of? I had better hang on to my money." I said I wanted to go to the opera, and there was not much Tant could do about it but keep a stiff upper lip. After all, I was 24 years old, and there was nothing wrong in going to the opera. She let her anger spill over to Ida when she came in the room and was excited about my going. "Why don't you get yourself invited to the Opera?" she sneered. Ida reddened and left the room. I sneaked off to my room, and was glad I had a room in which to hide.

The next day after school I went to the Norwegian Club again, and there he was waiting for me. It was as if we had known each other forever. A couple of other men were there and one girl, and we all got acquainted. They wanted Kris to play bridge with them, and he asked me to sit by him. I did, but he paid more attention to me than to the cards, much to the annoyance of the others. When another man showed up, they asked him to take Kris' place, and teased us already as two lovebirds. When they heard we were going to the opera, the teasing got worse, and we left soon after. It was all in good fun, we didn't mind, but I dared not get home too late for dinner, and I also had to dress.

After dinner Kris picked me up and was introduced to Tant and Ida. Tant was cold and formal, Ida was friendly and interested. I understood that he didn't make a good impression on Tant, after all his clothes had seen better days, and even in those days his suit wouldn't have measured up, but his manners were impeccable. We made the meeting short and were soon on our way to the opera. We walked, of course. It was only a twenty to thirty minute walk. I had dressed in my only good dress, a black velvet brought from Norway, and felt festive and excited in spite of my short hair. I had never been to an opera before.

There was a tense moment before we went in when Kris told me that he had to pay a small fee to get the tickets, and he had no money. He asked if I had any. He didn't know that I had money any money at all. He thought all refugees were in the same situation he was, with just enough to get by. What he would have done had I not had any money with me, I wondered at the time, but since I had a couple of kroner, the subject became moot. I later learned that he had asked almost everybody in the Norwegian Colony for a couple of kroner, and told them what he needed it for. They had teased him mercilessly, but had honestly tried to get him the money, though nobody had any to spare. One of them had promised him the money if it turned out I didn't have any. Fortunately I had taken some money with me.

Our seats were in the very best section of the auditorium and Tosca was the performance for the evening. I knew nothing about opera. I had heard the name Tosca, but when the prima donna sang a lovely aria I realized I had heard it before. I looked at Kris more than I looked at the stage. He was so totally absorbed in the music and action on stage that he didn't notice my looking at him. He had a handsome profile. He wasn't handsome when I met him, but he certainly wasn't ugly as Tant had told me when I came home. He was scrawny looking and pale, and his clothes were atrocious - clean, with no fit at all. But he must have made a good impression on me, for here I am, over fifty years later and still married to him.

It was a long opera, and not one I would recommend as a first opera to hear, but I enjoyed some of the music and I also enjoyed being in the opera and seeing elegant people, feeling excitement in the air, the bright lights, the costumes and the scenery. It was a memorable evening in more ways than one. I have been to numerous opera performances since that first one, and still it is a special treat for me to hear and see an opera.

After the opera I invited Kris to go someplace for a snack. I had to pretend I was hungry before he would accept. We went to a place called Brenda Tomten close to the opera. It was a fairly expensive place so we ordered tea and toast, the same as young people today go out for a pizza. I never tasted better tea and

toast, although I ate very little. And what I didn't eat, Kris did, as he does to this day.

Tant was waiting for me when I came home, although it was very late. She remarked about the time, and I said we had been out for a bite to eat. "He didn't look like he had money for that," she stated. "He invited me to the opera, and I invited him out for tea and toast," I answered defiantly. It was then she told me that she couldn't understand what I saw in him because he was so ugly, and I better hold on to my money, otherwise he would get it all, and I should give him up now, because it would be easier than later. She had talked to Aunt Rose, who agreed with Tant in everything she said. I listened without comments, but was more determent than ever to see him again.

CHAPTER THREE

Not long after I met Kris, Ida met a Norwegian seaman, with whom she had a date. She was very excited. I am not sure how she met him. She was vague when I asked and said his name was Konrad. She had confided in me that she hadn't had a date before, and she was still a virgin. Now she wanted me to tell her what to wear to look her best. I asked where they were going, and she said he had invited her to a movie, and she was going to invite him out for something to eat after the movie.

Her mother thought it was nice for Ida to be invited to a movie, and the fact that he was non-Jewish, a seaman, and a refugee with little money, didn't seem to bother her. Ida had a date and that was a glorious event. When he came to pick her up, I was startled. Granted Ida wasn't pretty, but she was raised in luxury and moved in rather refined circles. Konrad was a typical country bumpkin. He had on a suit that he obviously hadn't worn since confirmation - it was too tight and too short, but he was in excellent physical condition, a hunk of a man in today's vocabulary. His hair was red and stiff, almost crew-cut, which made his head look like a porcupine ready for attack. His nose was strong and protruding, his chin somewhat receding, but what struck me most were his missing front teeth. Because he was totally out of his environment, his manners were clumsy, and his speech typically street, which Ida could not be expected to

recognize since she was Swedish and he Norwegian. The languages are similar enough to be understood one by the other, but different enough that the tenuous distinction in speech would be hard to detect. Konrad seemed to be gentle and friendly, and Ida was proud to present him. After they left, Tant said, "A nice young man, don't you think?" I just nodded, speechless, and made myself ready to go out to meet the ugly Kris.

We had seen each other every day at the Norwegian club since we met. A bridge game was in session constantly, and whenever a fourth was needed, one of us was invited to play. The other would sit closely behind, touching. We were definitely a couple and were teased about it unmercifully, but it didn't bother us. The Norwegian Club became our home; the atmosphere was amicable, and we soon became friends with everybody who came. All of them were dirt poor, and I often wished I had some food stamps so that I could have brought treats once in a while. I felt guilty for living as well as I did without contributing, but my reserve was getting smaller, and I would soon need it to get an apartment; Tant definitely didn't like that I no longer was available to play Canasta. If I had known how to get away from there gracefully, I would have done it immediately. I was just waiting for an opportunity.

Kris shared a room with a man who worked the swing-shift. The room was long and dark with a bed at each end, a dresser

and a couple of rickety chairs. It wasn't much better than my room, but the rent did at least include the bathroom. When I think about it now, I wonder how we ever managed to make love in such gloomy surroundings, although his room was not completely without charm. He had an old violin, his old cigar box he called it, but he still managed to play me some lovely tunes. With a pink scarf over the table lamp and live music, the environment was magically transformed.

Tant was going away for a couple of days, and Ida was ecstatically happy. She wanted me to invite Kris for the week-end, and she would invite Konrad. We would make dinner and have a lovely time. I hesitated but promised I would ask Kris. He exploded. "I am not welcome in that house under regular circumstances and I refuse to sneak around when she is not home, I never go where I am not welcome." I told Ida but she pleaded with me. "You know how Mother is. If it were up to me, he would be welcome here all the time, but please, please do this for me, I can't invite Konrad if you and Kris are not here." I promised to ask him to come at least for dinner. Suddenly Ida said. "I am sure you have noticed Konrad's missing teeth, I wish he would do something about it." "Why doesn't he? I asked. "If it is a matter of money, the Legation will pay for it." "I have told him," she answered, "But he is scared to death of the dentist." I had had enough dental work done to know that the dentist's chair was no picnic, so I dropped the subject.

Kris was talked into having dinner with us, but he didn't like it one bit, and the evening was not a success. We went into my room after dinner, and the difference in the furnishings of their apartment and my room made him so angry that he left. For me the weekend was a disaster, but not for Ida. It became the night she lost her virginity, and she was very happy about finally becoming a woman, as she described it.

I didn't see much of my aunt these days either, and she complained bitterly. She knew I was going with that unemployed, gentile, ugly actor refugee, and although she disagreed with Tant who thought him ugly, she wasn't pleased either. At every opportunity she was ready with a barb, and I stopped going there. Both Tant and Rose warned me about using my money on him. I told them I hadn't but I lied. He had exchanged 300 of my Norwegian kroner, and when he wanted to give me the Swedish money, I told him to keep it to help him over the difficult times he was having. I, of course, thought he would have it and augment his meager meals. How wrong I was. A couple of days later I discovered that he still only had his one meal ticket a day and no money. When I asked what had happened to the money, he just looked at me and didn't answer. I heard him mumble: "I refuse to be kept by you or anyone else." I don't know what he did with the money, but I think he must either have paid back some old debts or given it to other refugees who were short. I never again gave him a large sum of money. I rather saw to it that he

had something to eat every day. To this day Kris can't keep money in his pocket. That's why he lets me handle all the financial matters.

. A couple of days after Ida's big event Konrad left for England without telling her about it. Ida was crushed for a while. He hadn't even called her before he left. I thought that was thoughtless, too, but tried to comfort her the best I knew how. I assured her that when men were ordered to leave for England, they were sent there fast, and nobody was to know that they were going. I don't know how true it was, but it helped soothe her.

Then she met David, a Norwegian refugee who was considered to be a confirmed bachelor. I knew him and the family well, and was happy for Ida. The two of them complemented each other like peaches and cream. They liked music and books and soon began to date seriously. David got a job in their antic store, and it looked like Ida finally had got a real beau. I had never seen her happier, and even Tant started to look pleased and to act a little friendlier. Ida was after me to meet a friend of David's, but I wasn't very receptive. She told me he was teaching at the University of Oslo, was a very well known writer, and wrote regularly for several of Stockholm's newspapers. She wouldn't leave me alone. She said she had told him about me, and he was eager to meet me.

Kris worked at that time at the Dramatiska Theateren, and I met him every night at 11 p.m. I told Ida yes, I would go with them to meet this Albert Brock-Utne, but I had to leave in time to meet Kris at 11 o'clock.

And thus I met the other half of my destiny. The resume of this man was remarkable. He is mentioned in the Norwegian *Encyclopedia* as an outstanding scientist. When he was 25 years old he received the King's Gold Medal for scientific work. His field was ethnology. By the time I met him he had written about twenty-five books and articles about everything imaginable, especially about people and their milieu. He was also an artist, but had given up painting for science.

He was 36 years old, tall and lanky, a little stooped. He had a strong face, intelligent blue eyes, large nose, bad skin. His suit was worn through at the elbows, he looked untidy, and he smelled like he hadn't washed in a long time. He hadn't. I have a wood carving made in Norway of a tall seedy looking man with a briefcase, and I know that the wood-carver must have had Albert Brock-Utne as a model.

His articles appeared in the Swedish newspapers regularly. He raged against Stalin, who at that time was our ally, just as he had raged against Hitler since 1933. He said where Hitler would kill one hundred, Stalin would kill a thousand. He dared

to say that when we won the war, we were not to treat the Nazis the way the Nazis had been treating us - if we did, we would be no better than them. It made sense to me, but he got many refugees against him. They thought he was a Nazi sympathizer because he was not blood-thirsty enough, and because his brother in Norway had joined the Nazi party. Brocken, as he had asked me to call him, confided in me early that one of the reasons he left Norway was the fact that his brother had joined the party. He loved his brother very much, and couldn't understand what had happened to him. "He must have gone through temporary insanity," he concluded.

Brocken invited me to join a discussion circle at his place the following day, and I accepted. I told Kris about it, and Kris, who was an avid newspaper reader, had read his articles. He would have liked to come with me, but he was working. Brocken was obviously happy to see me and introduced me to the other members, about ten men, some of whom I knew by name. One man gave an introductory speech about "What is Culture," which was very informative and made for a lively discussion afterwards. I listened mostly and found that I learned a lot and enjoyed myself immensely. When they decided what the next topic would be and where it would be held, they also invited me to join them. I was delighted to accept. I knew I didn't have much to offer these learned men, but I also knew it would benefit me greatly by just listening. I was excited when I met Kris and told him.

A couple of days later I met Brocken again. He was eating lunch at a small restaurant where I also came in to eat. He motioned for me to join him. The restaurant was serving potatoes with the skin on, which was something I was not used to from home, and I peeled my potatoes. When I saw that Brocken was not about to peel his, I did it for him. He was thoroughly impressed that I would do such a thing for him. Of course, today we know that it is healthier to eat potatoes with the skin on, but this was fifty years ago and we hadn't reached that point yet. I mention it because Brocken told me later that he had been very enamored by me until then, but by my doing this little thing for him made him fall deeply in love. I laughed it off. He knew I was seeing Kris.

It was getting close to the 17th of May, the Norwegian day of independence, and the Colony was going to have a get-together on *Skansen* in *Djurgaarden*; Stockholm's large beautiful amusement and recreation park located by one of the city's many channels. Stockholm is built on seven islands with impressive bridges connecting them. It was a big city even fifty years ago, but it wasn't so big that we couldn't either walk or take the streetcar wherever we wanted to go. Last time I was in Stockholm I found nothing familiar about the city, it had changed so much. The channels hadn't changed of course, but the new bridges were more grandiose than ever.

Kris told me that he had been asked by a group to read Norwegian poems that day, and he was excited about it. So was I. I would get to hear him, and he would be paid for it. We were going together to the park to celebrate, and when Norwegians celebrate, it means liquor. It seemed like everybody had a bottle, and we were offered many drinks. I didn't take any, but Kris did and had a good time. I found some friends I talked to and walked a little way with them, and when I came back to find Kris, he was gone. I looked everywhere, and asked everybody, but nobody had seen him. I thought it strange that he would go home without me, since we had come together, but thought he might have gone home to rehearse the poems he was preparing for that night. I took the street-car to his place, but wasn't sure I would find him.

He was sound asleep. I tried to awaken him, but to no avail. That made me mad, and I started to shake him. I got him half awake, and told him he'd better get up and make himself presentable for that night. "I'm not going", he mumbled. "Oh, yes you are," I said. "You have promised those people to be there, they are expecting you, and you get up. Just because you celebrated too much is no excuse for not showing up." I was disgusted with his behavior but didn't want him to lose this opportunity, and I didn't want him to make a fool of himself in the Norwegian community, so I was firm. I had seen drunk people at parties before, and didn't put more into it than he had taken too many drinks at the park.

I made it clear to him that if he didn't go and do his job, it was the last time he would see me, and that scared him. He went through the whole stagefright act: "I can't do it, I won't remember, I will make a fool of myself," over and over, and I kept reassuring him that he would be O.K. He finally got up and went into the bathroom to take a shower, and when he came out again, he looked like his own self, but had a sheepish grin on his face. He kept saying he was sorry, and I admonished, "Yeah, yeah, hurry up! It's getting late, you need something in your stomach before you go up on that stage." I didn't have much time to think of how I had been left by myself in the park. The only thing in my mind was that if he shirked his responsibilities now, it would be finished between us.

His reading was a success. Seeing him up on that stage with command over his subject was quite a change from the frightened young man I had seen only a few hours ago. It made me realize how vulnerable he was, but not wanting to think about it at the moment, I pushed it back in my mind, like I did with most of my disagreeable thoughts.

CHAPTER FOUR

Kris had told me a little about himself. He was born two months prematurely, and his mother died of the Spanish Flu a few days after he was born. He was so little that he slept in a shoe box. His father never re-married, and he and his sister Mary, who was five years older, lived with their father in a small community a few miles outside Oslo, in Sandvika. The house in which he lived as a child is still there. It is one of the few places left which has been preserved. His father was a baker, and during the tumultuous years of depression changed jobs several times. His father's sister, Aunt Nanna, lost her apartment in the city and moved in with them in Sandvika. Then his aunt got another apartment in Oslo and they all moved together there. "The irony of the whole thing," he told me, "was that when Papa lived in Sandvika and lost his first job, he got another job in Oslo and had to commute, and later, when he moved to Oslo, he got back his old job in Sandvika and had to commute again."

His aunt had never married, and Kris became her favorite, much to Mary's chagrin. There was a constant pull in the family, and the father was too passive to be much help. Aunt Nanna had been the instigator for his music lessons, which had started at the age of six. She worked at the National Theater in Oslo, and the theater more or less became his second home. It was

a matter of course for him to become an actor; he loved the theater and everything connected with it, and had been well on his way in both acting and directing when the war came and the Germans took over the theater agenda. Kris refused to perform for the Germans, and escaped to Sweden instead.

He adored Aunt Nanna but loved his father and Mary too, though Mary blamed him for their mother's death, and his father never said anything to repudiate it. "A heavy burden for a small child," I thought, and immediately became very protective of him. Mary had married a sea captain, and thought she had raised herself up in society. She moved to a small apartment in a nicer district of the city and felt very important. The family visited her every week, and she was so afraid they would dirty her clean floors, that they had to leave their shoes outside in the corridor before she let them in the house. Still, in spite of their differences, he felt close to his sister.

One day she showed up in Stockholm. How and why she came I never discovered, but I surely felt her presence. Kris was busy taking her around and introducing her to his important friend, a star at Stockholm's opera. He had mentioned her name numerous times, but there never was a question of my being introduced. When he was so eager to introduce his sister, I again was the outsider, and I spent a lot of time with Brocken. He had mentioned, almost from the day I met him, that he wanted to take

pictures of me, especially when I was unaware of being looked at. I asked if he was a photographer, but he just shrugged his shoulders and grunted, as he always did when he wasn't sure if he should be honest or tell a lie. Eventually I let him take the pictures, but they didn't come out. He assured me that as soon as he got some money, he would pay a photographer to take pictures of me.

Brocken was a bit of a rogue. He told everybody that he was an heir to a large fortune, and he only had to wait for his aunt's departure from this earth before he became rich. Some forty-five years later he did become heir to a large fortune, so he was right in claiming he was an heir, but in Stockholm he had everybody believe it would happen soon, because his aunt was in ill health. He had lived in style at Grand Hotel for several months before the management finally told him he had to pay or leave. He moved into an apartment instead, but he missed the hotel service. He had no trouble raising money. He could just write an article and get paid immediately, but his money vanished in too many places. Among other things he was also an philanthropist, and helped the many refugees he came in contact with. When I lent him money for rent, he had almost paid the bill at Grand Hotel, and it didn't take long before he paid me back too. As soon as he was paid up he made an appointment with a photographer to have my pictures taken, and I let him. The pictures turned out beautifully, every time I look at them I think of how they came to be.

Kris and Brocken met and became friends. In the beginning they tolerated each other because of me, but it didn't take long before they liked each other. They both loved to talk, and I had no desire to compete with either one. I listened as they had numerous discussions about economics, education, religion, humanities, politics, prejudices, and the rest of the world's problems. By listening to them I learned to know them both well. They discussed everything except music, the only subject of which Brocken knew nothing. They didn't always agree, but when Brocken thought Kris was wrong, he had such a gentle way of expressing his opinion that it didn't sound like he was disagreeing at all. It was clever, and could have been dangerous had he been an evil man.

Mary took a liking to me, and when she heard of my living circumstances, she asked me to share an apartment with her. When Brocken heard that we were looking for a place to live, he told me that there was an apartment for rent in his building. We immediately inquired about it. The family who lived there also owned a summer place, and rented out their apartment for three months. The apartment was in a good location and nicely furnished, and we were glad to get it. It made it easier for me to accept since it was only for a short time, in case it turned out that Mary and I didn't like to live together.

It was easier than I expected to tell Tant that I was moving, because she was planning her vacation, Ida was going away for the week-end, and the maid wasn't going to be around. Everything fell in place. I felt like I had been emancipated and was happier than I had been in a long time. When my Aunt understood that she wouldn't see me without accepting Kris, she invited him and was decent toward him. I think she understood that he wouldn't take any nonsense from her, so she behaved. With Karl gone so much of the time, she was often lonely, and when I introduced Brocken into her life, she was in the seventh heaven, because he and Kris were perpetually hungry, and she loved to cook. We had a standing invitation, and we saw her often.

The living arrangement turned out well. Mary cleaned and I cooked, doing what we both did best. Since we seldom went to the Norwegian Club any more, the people we had met there came to us instead, and we had a steady flow of hungry refugees visiting us. Kris stayed with us most of the time, but I insisted he keep his room for even in Sweden at that time, people didn't openly live together without being married, although sleeping together was no big deal. And also I didn't want to be put in a living situation again over which I had no control.

During the summer Kris had no job, and he couldn't ask the Legation for help, for they would have sent him out in the

country to do gardening. I didn't want him to leave, and Mary liked to have him around as an escort, so she and I shared the cost of food. But the shortage of pocket money became a source of irritation between the siblings. Mary had plenty of money, but she didn't want to help him out, and he was angry because she was so stingy. The two of them quarreled often, and I didn't like it. I thought Mary treated her brother in a condescending manner, and I didn't like to see him as the underdog. If I had foreseen the quarreling I would have encouraged him to take a summer job in the country. When I mentioned this, he explained that if he was sent out of Stockholm, he most certainly would not be allowed to come back, since he didn't have a full time job waiting for him. And if he wasn't in the city prodding the administration to send him to England, they would only forget about him. As soon as the theater season started in the fall, he would have his little job back.

In the meantime I went to my factory job every day, and it was no fun packing underwear eight hours a day. I was on my feet all the time, and at the end of the day I was glad if I got a seat on the streetcar. Kris met me every day where I got off the streetcar and walked with me home. Sometimes he was late, and that made me furious. I couldn't understand why I had to stand on my aching feet waiting for him when he, who had nothing to do, couldn't be there in time to meet me. We started quarreling too.

One day Mary came home very excited. She had been looking at a fur coat which had been reduced considerably during the summer, and had decided to get it. But it cost several thousand kroner, and she would have to charge it and pay monthly payments. But the store wouldn't let her have the coat without her having a sponsor. She said to Kris: "I'll ask Gertrud, she said if I needed anything, I should ask her." Kris exploded: "You don't dare to ask her. Here I have known her for two years and never asked her for a penny though I certainly could have used it. Don't you go asking her for anything. Don't forget she is my friend, and you have only recently been introduced to her." They got into a heavy quarrel, and I went down to see Brocken. I was sick of all that shouting.

I told Brocken what was going on, and he thought Kris was right in being angry. A lecture in ethics followed my tale. It was unseemly of Mary to infringe on his friends. "I would not dream of visiting your aunt without you," he assured me, "although she has invited me for lunch many times. I have always refused the invitation if you were not going with me. She is your Aunt, and I met her through you. It would not be right for me to take up with your family or friends without you. I will only go there when we are all invited. That is the proper thing to do." I thought he was a little old-fashioned in his reasoning, and assured him that he could go and see Rose whenever he was invited, I didn't mind, especially since I was working all

day. He only grunted, his usual answer when he was unsure of what to say. "But that is not the issue," he finally said, "it is not right of Mary to go to his friends without his O.K." "I agree, I agree," I laughed, "but you can still see Rose whenever you want."

Of course Mary went behind Kris' back and got her fur coat with Gertrud's blessings, and he was so mad that he stayed away from her a few days. "Here she can't lend me five kroner," he complained to me, "and then she uses my friends to buy herself a coat for several thousands. She is so selfish she can't see beyond her nose." I agreed.

Brocken thought it was too bad that I had to work in a factory, and mentioned that I would be better off in a desk job. I told him the only desk job I could do was in the Legation, and I did not want to work there, for the administration treated the refugees shamefully in many ways. I had heard stories from my friends at the Norwegian Club, and we all frowned on their behavior. Brocken understood. He had seen how the people there were typical bureaucrats who made it hard for the average refugee to get what they had rightfully coming to them. Most of the people who worked there had left Norway shortly after the Germans occupied the country. They had come when it was easy to come across the border, and their reason for escaping was the lack of food and other goods. Their lives were not in danger. They had

been there since the refugee program started and thought they personally owned the Legation.

The Swedish shorthand that I was struggling with when I met Kris was harder than I had anticipated. I hadn't mastered the language enough to write correctly yet. A desk job in a Swedish office was out of the question, and for the time being I was stuck with the job I had. It was a living, and I had to work since the Legation had decided to exchange no more Norwegian kroner. My money supply was very low at the time. The only one with money was Mary, and she didn't part with any to help others. With my feet swelling up from standing so long in one stretch, every day became a pain. Brocken seemed to be the only one who cared.

He became my mentor.

CHAPTER FIVE

Brocken taught me how to think independently and how to write what I thought. I realized how little guidance I had received in my life. My brothers got all of the instruction in religion and in how to behave. I got indiscriminate love from all of them. It gave me an inner security without which I doubt I would have survived all the adversities of life. My parents took for granted the good grades I brought home from school, and my father probably thought my mother taught me everything I needed to know about religion. I believe my mother didn't know anything about Judaism herself except how and what to cook for the holiday meals and certain prayers. I was taught a prayer spoken in Hebrew before the meals, and that was the extent of my religious learning.

My parents kept a strictly kosher household and implored me not to eat meat outside the home, especially pork, and until I was twenty years old I never did, nor did I eat or drink on Yom Kippur. I was brainwashed in our eating habits, but I learned nothing about why we kept the dietary rules, the history of our religion, nor what the prayers meant - they were all in Hebrew. My brothers went to Hebrew school, but since I was a girl there was no Hebrew school for me. I went to synagogue with my parents, but understood nothing of what was going on. And strangely enough, I had no curiosity about it. To me it was all

exceedingly boring. At the holiday meals I felt that the prayers were going on endlessly before we could eat, but I learned to be patient. I can truly say that I was brought up without religion.

Kris thought religion was humbug and fairy tales, and when we discussed with Brocken we found that he deplored organized religion. He had studied to become a minister in his youth, but withdrew before he was going to be ordained. He saw all the hypocrisy that took place in the seminary, and it turned him against the church. Instead he turned his studies around to the history of religion, and primitive people's religions. He found the standard of ethics among some of the primitive people higher than the ethics among the so-called civilized nations. His stories from the seminary were sometimes hilarious, and our discussions were far from staid.

He asked questions of me that nobody had asked before, and instead of taking for granted the dogmas I had learned, I emerged not believing them. I became conscious of not believing, and couldn't understand how intelligent people could believe such tales as walking on water, bodily ascending to Heaven, immaculate conceptions and the like. I became quite intolerant of others with such beliefs, and had a hard time understanding how intelligent people could believe that there were literally a heaven and a hell - that they would meet their loved ones in heaven after they died and then they would stay together forever

in a better life after death. I believed death was like a long dreamless sleep, the kind I would like to experience once in a while instead of lying awake nights. The only difference would be that I would not wake up.

I knew that nothing in my body would go to waste, it would become earth or ashes made up from the same substances as the body. But I didn't quite know what happened to my mind. I liked to believe that mites of my mind would meet up with other mites of mind and settle in some unborn human, but how this could happen I did not know, and I couldn't believe that God could do it. If God was so almighty, why hadn't he looked after my father and my brothers? Why did he let terrible things happen? Not having a belief didn't bother me. I didn't feel lost. What I didn't understand I didn't try to find an answer for. I only wanted to learn more. To give your soul to God and believe he would take care of you was too simple. Why was God a he anyway? I knew that the only one who would take care of me was myself, maybe with help from other humans around, not from an omnipotent mystical force.

I had never pondered such questions before, and it made me feel alive. They opened up secret places in my mind that I had been aware of, but hadn't known how to express. I had missed having somebody who thought I had enough intellect worthy of exploring. Brocken listened to me for hours. He questioned

and prodded. He pricked my reasoning and opened my mind to a world I had read about but hadn't really comprehended. Thoughts and feelings I knew existed were just waiting to burst forth and coming alive like nature in spring. I felt new, fresh and tremendously aware of everything around me.

I was in love with Kris, and most of the time we had fun together. We laughed and played a lot, and we pleased each other immensely. But I needed Brocken's mind to stimulate my intellect, and I felt extremely lucky that I had both of them. I joked with them that I had Kris for my body and Brocken for my mind. Kris didn't seem to care. He gave me all the freedom I needed to make me happy, and he wasn't the least jealous. He seemed to understand my needs. He appreciated Brocken's mind as much as I did, but he was more cautious in his assessment of him as a person.

Brocken taught me to write. We first discussed a topic I could write about, something I knew, and promised to introduce me to all his connections when I was ready to publish. A topic came up one day when I talked about some girls I knew whom we in Norway call "Loose Birds", but here we use much uglier words for them. I was telling Brocken about one girl I knew who slept with all the sailors she could get hold of, even the Negro ones.

"Do you know that you said something now that would be very offensive to other people?" he asked. I shook my head. "You were thoughtless right now when you said that she slept even with Negroes. Why should it be worse to sleep with a Negro sailor than a white sailor?"

I looked at him in horror and said, "I really said that, didn't I. And I wasn't even aware of what I was thinking. Such thoughtlessness. I will watch it in the future, to be sure. I can't believe I said that. That's as bad as when people say to me after my protesting foul things said about the Jews, 'but you are different, I like you.'"

We talked about it for a while and he suggested that I write an article about being thoughtless. He gave me sample after sample how thoughtless people were when they talked indiscriminately about others, and told me how to write it. I went home and wrote it, and then he corrected. He believed in pounding the same thing several times to get a point through. I believed in saying a thing strong enough the first time so that there would be no need to repeat. We compromised. Finally the paper was ready for publication, and he took me to an editor and introduced me. The editor promised to read the article and said I could come back the next day, and he would tell me if it was accepted.

This all happened so fast that I hadn't had time to think about being a writer. That in itself was exciting. I felt sure the article would be accepted, because it was a good article, it had been edited by an expert, and the topic ARE YOU THOUGHTLESS was actual. It was accepted, and I was paid handsomely. The article didn't appear for a while. The editor said he had to wait for the right moment to publish it. I didn't think I immediately had become a successful writer. I knew that without Brocken, it would never have happened, and the subject had been easy because I could relate to it. I didn't need to do any research. The next subject was more difficult "Women Ought To Be Politically Awake." I was just beginning to see daylight on this subject myself. I wasn't especially interested in politics, although I thought one ought to be aware of what was going on in the world. I felt I was back in school, writing an assignment, with the difference that I knew my finished product would be published.

It was getting close to Midsummer-night, June 23, and one day Mary announced that Gertrud had invited her and Kris for the weekend at her summer place. "What about me?", I said to Kris. "Will you leave me alone on Midsummer-night? Do you have to go? Let Mary go by herself." Mary didn't want to go alone, and Kris assured me that it would be good for his future if he went. He would meet so many important people there. I knew I would never win against Mary and Gertrud, so I shrugged my shoulders. But I

was far from happy about it. I didn't even mention anything to Brocken. I was ashamed of being left alone.

Mary couldn't be happier the day they left, she had no thoughts of me at all. Kris was unhappy about leaving, but it was too late to reconsider. I developed a terrible headache. I looked all over for aspirin but couldn't find any. I went down to Brocken to ask for some, and he invited me in.

"I just need to lie down, my headache is bad," I said.

"Why are you alone today?" he asked. "It is Midsummer-night, where is Kris?" I told him.

"You shouldn't be alone," he insisted. "You can stretch out on the sofa here, and I will give you some aspirin. You don't need to talk if you don't want to." I swallowed the aspirins and did as he suggested.

It took some time before the headache eased, and it was quiet in the room until I spoke. "Don't blame Kris too much. He is dependent on Mary for the time being, and she can be mean." Brocken agreed, and we talked for a while. It became quiet again, then he suddenly asked: "May I kiss you?" I hesitated, I had never been asked that questions before. You either kissed or you didn't, but Brocken still lived in the Victorian era.

"You can if you want to," I said finally, "but I don't want

to lead you on so that you fall in love with me, because it is still Kris for me." He made his usual grunting sound , and the subject was dropped. I was happy for that, I had no desire to kiss him, his personal hygiene hadn't changed much from the first time I met him.

He voiced his regrets and apologies for not having enough money to take me to dinner at Grand Hotel that evening, instead of a small cheap cafe where we split the cost. Later we went for a long walk. Normally I would have enjoyed the day, but the headache had left me depressed, and I was not good company. Brocken tried to cheer me up by telling me how wonderful I was, but that irritated me further, and we talked about neutral subjects. It was a long evening, one that I could never forget although I harbored no ill feelings.

The summer went fast. My job was getting easier since I was given a desk job that didn't include typing or shorthand. It was terribly boring, but at least I could sit down and be bored, and not have my feet ache by standing all day. When I complained to Brocken about the job, he said,

"Anyone who is having an un-interesting job and doesn't do anything to change it, deserves the job he or she is having. If you are satisfied with a desk job, you have no horizon."

"I am not satisfied," I wailed, "I want something else, but what can I do?"

"We'll find something," he promised, "just have patience, You can write, you know."

"Not enough to make a living. I can't sit down and just write the way you do. I don't know enough."

One day at the end of the summer I took one long look at Kris and Brocken as we were taking a walk, and I said: "You two look dreadful. Don't you think the Legation will give you some new clothes?" They both laughed.

"I have an idea," said Brocken. "Why don't we order a suit for Kris and one for me, I know a tailor, and I will tell him that I expect an advance on a book. By the time the suits are ready we will have the money somehow. Let's do it."

"Where are you going to get the money?" I wanted to know.

"We'll get it, let's do it."

Kris had no money and knew he never could make enough to buy a suit. Brocken had no money, though he could at least make enough to pay for a suit if he skipped the rent, and I had to save so that I could get a coat for the Winter. I still had no coat, and when I moved from Tant and Ida, they didn't offer to give me that ugly coat I had borrowed.

Nevertheless we went to the tailor just to look around, but we were easily talked into ordering the suits. Kris picked out a beautiful brown wool gabardine and Brocken a grey. Then they

were just as easily talked into getting a wintercoat each, and they achieved all this without paying a penny down. The tailor took their measurements and told them their clothes would be ready in three weeks. We got out of there in high spirits.

"I need a wintercoat too," I said. "What am I going to do for that?"

"You deserve a fur coat," said Brocken, and Kris agreed. So we went to look at fur coats, and I found a brown persian lamb, a hat and muff to go with it. We paid a small deposit and said we would pick it up in three weeks. It was as if our reason had suddenly deserted us. Happy as larks we were looking forward to the new image our new clothes would afford us. Brocken told us later that what we did was criminal. We could have ended up in jail for ordering clothes we knew we couldn't pay for. Kris and I didn't know that. As I said before, Brocken had some of the rogue in him.

CHAPTER SIX

Brocken had written one of his heartbreaking letters to the head of the Legation and explained that they must let me exchange my money, that I was not well and how would it look for them if they let a young Jewish girl who had lost her family, who stood alone against the world, get sick. They surely would not like to have that on their conscience, because they would be responsible. I knew he was trying to help me, but I didn't know he was going to that extent and was flabbergasted when a letter from the Legation came telling me I could continue to exchange 300 kroner @ month. That would be enough for the rent, and the rest I would have to earn by writing. I quit my job.

Mary had taken up with the dentist she had met when she went to get the free dental care to which all the refugees were entitled. He was an insignificant little man, married, as she was, but that didn't seem to bother her or the dentist. They carried on an affair openly, so much so that it became the biggest scandal in the colony, and had everybody talking. Kris was disgusted, as was I, and I was glad the summer was over and we were moving. Mary moved in with her dentist, and I had rented a room with a bathroom in a new apartment building. That's what I had - a room and a bath, no furniture. Somebody loaned me an old mattress that I put on the floor, I got hold of

some grey army blankets and that room became my castle. I was alone and I was free, and I didn't mind.

Sleeping on the cold floor didn't do my health any good, and I got the flu. Kris kept me in aspirins and held my hand, Brocken came in with a large basket of exotic fruit which cost an enormous amount of money. He must have used all the money from one article to acquire it, and since fruit was all I could keep down, it was nice to have. I told them not to let my aunt know that I was sick. I couldn't take any fuss and worrying just then, I needed rest to get well. It took a week before I was well enough to get up, and in the meantime the new clothes were ready to be picked up.

Kris had mentioned that he had met a bank president at Gertrud's Midsummer-night party, and been told that if he needed money and had Norwegian kroner, he could exchange them in his bank. None of us had paid much attention to it, because none of us had any money. My little reserve was getting exchanged every month again, and we didn't know anybody with Norwegian kroner. We didn't even think about it until one day Brocken came almost running to meet us and started to stutter so badly that we couldn't understand a word of what he was saying.

We were invited to Rose for lunch, and when we were seated Brocken told us the following:

"This is the story. A friend of mine asked me if I knew how to exchange Norwegian kroner, and I told him no, because I had nothing to exchange. Then he said that he had 100 000 N. kroner and he would sell them for 45% if I knew someone who would buy them. The exchange rate is 63%. I remembered that Kris had said something about a bank president he had met who told him he could exchange as much as he wanted. How is that?"

Kris answered. "He told me I could. I don't know if he meant it."

"Could you call him and ask?"

Kris was reluctant to call, but when we explained to him it meant 18 000 S. kroner for us, he changed his mind, and called. The offer was still standing.

We all became excited. Brocken called the man who had the money, but when he heard that we couldn't buy the money outright, he withdrew his offer. By now we had become dogs who had picked up a scent, and we went through all our acquaintances to see if they had money to sell, but to no avail. Brocken even called David, but he didn't have any N. kroner and didn't need any Swedish money, so he wasn't interested. And he reminded Brocken that it was unlawful to buy N. kroner and exchange for S. kroner, if it was not our own money. We brushed the warning aside.

We called all over town but had no luck. We gave up for that day. Kris felt a little stupid, having asked to exchange money and not showing up, but there was nothing we could do about that.

Then a couple of days later when we were all assembled at Rose's again, Brocken had exciting news: "I went up to talk to that guy with the money, and it looks like he has no place to exchange his money, so he is willing to talk. I am going up there to see him now. Stay here and I will be back as soon as I can."

"We waited for him over an hour when he came back with a long face: "I thought he was going to give me the money, but he changed his mind in the last minute, he wanted some kind of security, and I had none to give him."

"What about our I.D. cards. He knows we are helpless without our I.D. cards, so we would be sure to get back to him," I suggested.

"B-b-b-brilliant idea," Brocken stuttered, and called the man."

He was finally convinced that we meant business, and Brocken went back to get the money in exchange for the four I.D. cards

harbored in his pocket. We were getting more nervous by the minute. Would we be able to pull it off? Kris called the bank and asked when it would be convenient to exchange the money, and was told that any time would do.

Somehow it had become known that Kris had a source to exchange money and that Brocken was hunting for N. kroner, and another man called to talk to him, but Brocken had already left. This man was willing to give us the money without security, he told us, because he knew Brocken, and now we became very optimistic. Brocken called again, when it came to hand over the money, his source wouldn't do it, and he was coming back empty handed. We told him about the other man, and gave him the number. He called back and asked us to meet him outside the bank, he had the money. We hurried along to the bank.

Stockholm was a windy city. The one thing I remembered most about Stockholm was how cold I was in the wind and how we always complained bitterly about it. Usually we kept warm by walking fast. This day was cold and wintry, and I froze in my thin coat. We were all cold and stamped our feet, blew on our fingers, threw our arms about us, and waited for Brocken to show up with the money. We waited quite a while, and then we saw him coming running with a suitcase in his hand. He was out of breath when he reached us, and stammered furiously: "T-t-t-the m-m-m-money is

in t-t-t-the s-s-s-suitcase....." Kris grabbed the suitcase and disappeared into the bank: "It's late."

And then the waiting started again, one hour went by.

"I am scared," I said. "Where is he? Maybe the police got him?"

"Why police?" asked Rose, "He hasn't done anything unlawful."

"It is against the law to exchange money if it isn't your own," I answered.

"Maybe he took the money and skipped out another door," said Rose.

I gave her a fiendish look and went into the bank to look for him. He wasn't there. I went back to the others and told them that I hadn't seen him. So we waited some more.

We must have waited over two hours, when Rose said: "I am going home. You want to come with me?"

I shook my head and went into the bank to look for him again. He wasn't there.

When I came back out, I saw Rose starting to walk home. Brocken looked serious, but he hadn't said anything all this time and still didn't. I had no idea what he was thinking.

Suddenly Kris appeared with a great, big smile on his face. I was so relieved that I almost fainted. He called after Rose in

his big stage voice and asked her to wait for us, and we all went to her place and counted the money.

Brocken got the money he needed to pay the man, but he didn't want to take any more. "It is your money," he said to Kris. "You had the connection, this is your deal." Kris gave Rose some money, and split the rest with me. I was glad to take it, I had a feeling that the money wouldn't last long in his pockets.

"Where were you all this time?" I asked.

"I went to the castle and had tea," he answered. We laughed and thought he was kidding us, but he wasn't.

"I didn't have tea," he said, "but when I came in to the bank and asked for the manager, he wasn't there, he had gone to the castle for an errand, and had left word that if he was needed, they should call him there. I told them I had come to exchange money, and the manager had authorized it, but nobody, of course, could do anything without his signature. So I insisted that they call him at the castle, and the secretary finally did. He was having tea with the princess and asked me to come up there so that he could sign the paper. I ran up there, I must say I felt a little nervous, I didn't know what they were going to ask me, and what I could tell them. But I was asked in and presented to the princess, and invited to tea. I declined

the t - wanted to get out of there as soon as I could.
I got shed back to the bank before it closed.
It wa - m count all that money. I put it in the
suitcase, and here I am." He was obviously pleased with himself.

We ended up with 18 000 kroner in all. That was a lot of money. It took 300 kroner @ month to live meagerly, and about 500 to get by fairly well. We could have invested some of the money, that would have been the smart thing to do, but there were too many holes in which to put the money and we had no idea about investments anyway.

The first thing we did was to pick up the clothes that Brocken and Kris had ordered. They looked like different people, especially Kris. He looked handsome and wealthy and acted the part of a rich philanthropist. We picked up my fur coat, hat and muff, and I felt warm and cozy and elegant. Then we bought new footwear, and I bought warm high boots. I was set for the winter. We did some shopping of necessities, and a new dress for me. At that moment we were on top of the world.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Many different things got started after I met Brocken. He knew practically everybody, from everyman to the highest officials in the State Department, and he was genuinely interested in all happenings around him. When he heard about my brother being incarcerated at Berg, he inquired about my parents and our childhood. I told him that my father had been born in Riga, which was part of Russia at that time, and he had escaped from there because he didn't want to be inducted into the Russian Army for the rest of his youth. He went on foot to Finland, stayed there for some time, continued to Stockholm, where he met my mother, married her when she was barely eighteen. He was twenty-eight. They went on to Copenhagen where my two oldest brothers were born. What he did and where he lived between youth and twenty-eight I don't know. He must have reached Oslo in 1914 or 1915, where my brother Sigurd was born in 1915 and I faced the world in 1918.

My mother had another girl, Vera, who was born in 1920. but she died when she was two. I remember little from that time, but I do remember my mother being hysterical before Vera died, when my mother was trying to save her. She visited every mystic and every quack in town she thought could help. The baby had scarlet fever and my mother tried to keep the other children away from her so that we would not be smitten. She succeeded in

that, but not in saving Vera. Somehow she got blood poisoning in her knee and on top of her weakened condition from the fever, the doctor was unable to save her. It was the blood poisoning that eventually killed her. I remember her being blond and blue-eyed and beautiful, but after she was gone, her name was never again mentioned by my mother. The little I heard I got from Asta, our maid, who was with us from the time I was one year old until I was seventeen. I became the center of my mother's attention, and when I was out of her sight, she never had a moment's peace before I was back.

Brocken picked up on my mother's birthplace. He thought that it would only be natural for Rolle to be declared a Swedish Citizen since his mother was Swedish, and he told me he had friends in the State Department whom he would alert to the situation. Maybe something could be done. I felt like a big burden was lifted from my shoulders as soon as Brocken took hold of the case, I knew he had helped many people in different countries to get the necessary papers either to get out from the country they wanted to leave or to stay where they wanted to be. Rolle's case could not be in better hands, and both of us had already sent several letters to the State Department. We had also received answers from them, so we knew the case was under consideration.

Before I quit work we had talked endlessly about what I wanted to do with my life, and when Brocken heard that I was interested in math, he arranged and paid for private lessons for me in math with a Doctor in Mathematics, a refugee from Germany. He said the man needed money, and I could use the lessons, so twice a week, I got instruction in higher math. I found the good doctor boring, but in spite of that I learned a lot. We had also applied to the University of Stockholm and had both been accepted to Chemistry Lab. As soon as I quit my job, we both enrolled in the class. Brocken said he might as well take it with me, he had always wanted to know more about chemistry. I wondered if that really was his reason.

We had also been looking for apartments. I didn't like the place I was renting, not enough to buy furniture for it, and Brocken's apartment had also been temporary, so we were both looking. We had been looking for furnished apartments, but with all the students coming back from the summer and the refugees from every country in Europe flooding the city, furnished apartments in the city were very hard to get. After the EXCHANGE, when we had some money for a down payment on furniture, we settled for a new apartment complex twenty minutes with train from Stockholm. Brocken got an apartment in one building and I in another. Kris kept his room in the city for easy access the nights he was too late for the train to get to me, and because I didn't want to live openly with him yet.

The apartments were nice, and we went furniture shopping. For a small down payment I got a day bed, a desk with built-in bookcases, a dining-room set and a couple of chairs. Brocken got the necessities for his apartment. I saw a beautiful tea-table in textured glass and bamboo which I wanted badly, but I thought I would be practical and take only what I needed. Brocken saw how much I wanted it, and he put two of them on his bill, one for him and one for me. I have never seen anything quite like those tables since, and I wish I still had mine.

Some time before the money deal Kris had been involved with a Norwegian Theater group. The chief of the theater in which he had been employed in Oslo, had come to Stockholm with his actress wife. She wanted to try her wings as director and had started this little group. She chose a heavy drama which was to be played in a dialect called New Norwegian. I neither liked the play nor the language, but sadly enough nobody asked me. There was a handsome blond boy with whom the director had a love scene, and I am convinced that was the reason for that bum play. Just before the coup Kris had mentioned that he didn't know if they could put on the play, because there was no money.

When it was known that Kris had money, they all rejoiced and went on with the play, and the director had all the bills sent to Kris. She promised he would get his money back as soon as her husband received a large honorarium he expected, and Kris

believed her. The money was running on burning feet, and he was so busy with the theater that very little time was left for me. Kris had been given the main part of the play, probably because he was the only one in that group who knew how to act. The love scene which the director wanted to play herself should have been played by an ingenue, but she insisted she could do it though she must have been at least 40 and her actor/lover in his early twenties. Strangely enough, her husband, the theater chief, never put his foot in the theater while they were rehearsing. She said he was out of town and would be back in time for the opening. They had all been going out to eat after the rehearsals and Kris had been paying the bills. The director/ingenue had gathered all the bills, telling Kris she would be paying her share as soon as her husband came back to town. Kris, poor innocent soul, saw nothing wrong in that. I was pretty upset with the whole arrangement.

Then her husband came to town, and he followed Kris on the street car one day, and presented him with the bills his wife had gathered, saying: "I can't have my wife paying the food bills for you, you better pay these bills." Kris tried to explain to him that he was the one who had paid the bills, and his wife owed Kris money, but her husband wouldn't listen. He insisted that Kris pay the bills. Kris asked him to go to hell and jumped off the street car. This was his boss he had asked to go to hell, and that didn't bode well for his future as an actor

at the Norwegian Theater. When he told us about it, we were dumbfounded. Brocken said he would act as Kris' lawyer and write the man a letter.

It didn't slow down Kris' enthusiasm for the play. "The show must go on," he said. The day of the dress rehearsal Kris was broke. The director told him just before her big love scene that she had bought a new dress and it would be delivered soon, and "the bill comes to you, for the money you owe me," she said to Kris. Kris exploded: "I don't owe you any money, you owe me, as you well know, and besides I have no more money, and even if I did, I certainly wouldn't pay for your dress," he shouted on the top of his voice. "I have to have a new dress," she screamed back at him, "and you said you would pay for it." Kris screamed back, "I never said I would pay for your dress, why should I pay for your dress. I wouldn't buy you a dress, even if I could. Why should I? Let you husband buy your dresses, not me." The director became completely hysterical, she used every filthy word in the language and screamed at the top of her voice. Kris screamed back "Go to Hell," and left.

I happened to be in the audience for that scene, and Kris motioned to me to come outside. He was extremely upset. "I am not going in there again," he said. "To hell with the play, let's go." He took my arm and started to leave. The other actors came running after us and begged Kris to come back to the

play. "We know she is crazy," they said, "But this is the only chance we have to get in to the theater." Kris told them what had happened, but they thought he was slightly exaggerating. They didn't want to believe that their beloved theater chief and his wife could behave in such an indecent manner.

The play went on. It was a bomb. The Swedish people didn't understand what was going on, and the Norwegian public wished they hadn't. Kris was magnificent, the only one who could play. It was a heavy drama. The soldier in uniform (Kris) was going to war, his sweetheart was lying by his feet crying, begging him not to go and repeating over and over in heavy Norwegian dialogue: "I want a child with you, I want to have a child with you"; and the soldier answering (in dialect) with much ardor: "I want to have a child with you too." I was moved enough to get tears in my eyes listening to this heart-breaking situation. The tears were not because I was laughing, although my aunt laughed until she cried.

I had invited the whole cast and crew to my place after the opening night for a party, although after the latest developments I had second thoughts. I still went ahead with it because the rest of the people had been looking forward to a party. Parties were a rare occasion in the refugee's life. There was neither money nor a place to have them. This happened to be a party I will never forget. The director/ingenue grabbed the scene from

the beginning. She gave a speech to the cast and the crew. Every actor was mentioned by name and given a big compliment for his or her part in the play. Every crew member was mentioned and also praised. I was even mentioned and thanked for giving the party. But the heart and soul of the play, the one who had financed the play and given it at least some dignity, Kris, wasn't mentioned at all.

By that time we looked at the whole event with humor, and her exclusion of Kris' name just made us laugh. The other cast members called out to her: "Kris, you forgot Kris, we couldn't have done it without Kris." "He was good too," she said and started to talk about something else right away. We all looked at each other and laughed.

She talked on and on. Suddenly she grabbed her chest and fell on the floor. She acted like she had fainted. The others knelt beside her and tried to get life in her, but she was limp and lifeless. I knew it was only an act and took a pot of cold water and threw in her face, and sure enough, she sprang up with the vigor of a lion and wanted to know who had thrown the water on her. "I did," I smiled, "It did help, didn't it?" Then she grabbed my arm and whispered: "Did my tears seem natural, was my speech good, did I fall down with grace, did I do well?" I assured her that she had done an excellent job, knowing at that time that I'd better humor her, before she became completely

hysterical. I understood then that she was neurotic, maybe even a little bit crazy.

Fortunately her husband came, and we told him what had happened. We called for a taxi and he didn't even take her arm when they left. He knew that she could take care of herself - she was only play acting. The party ended shortly after, and Kris and I were left to clean up. Kris was mentally down. "I'll never be able to get a job in the Norwegian Theater again," he lamented, and I silently agreed.

Brocken, acting as Kris' attorney, wrote a letter to the theater chief, giving him the whole story, and accusing him of extorting young actors. He demanded that he pay his wife's bills. The chief answered the letter, excused himself for having misunderstood the situation, but didn't at this time have any money. He promised to pay back everything his wife owed after the war was over. That was the last we heard of them both.

That bum became the chief for the National Theater in Norway. If we had been there, we would have seen to it that his shenanigans were exposed, but when we got the news, we had been in America for many, many years, and he had been chief for several years, so we decided that nothing really could be done at that point.

CHAPTER EIGHT

We celebrated my 25th birthday with a dinner at Grand Hotel. Aunt Rose and Kalle, and Dora whom I had met again and introduced to Brocken, were included in the party. When Dora had heard about the discussion groups, she had asked if she could be included, and she came a couple of times. Then she got bored. But we were all in an excellent mood to celebrate my birthday, and we had a great evening. Kris ordered red, long-stemmed roses, and although I thought they were an unnecessary expense, they were fun to get. This was before the theater group had taken all his money. We promised we would meet there again in another 25 years to see what had become of everybody. By that time we all expected to be rich and famous.

About this time the plot started to form regarding our going to America. From the time I met Brocken, he had said he was going as soon as the war was over. He had been awarded a Rockefeller Foundation Grant in research. I am not quite sure what he was going to research, and I don't know if he knew either, because he was interested in so many things, and every time he spoke about it, he wanted to research something different. It had to do with "Milieu and Religion," a greater religion-scientific work in several volumes in which he discusses the problem of the relationship between milieu and religion. The work had just been published in England and was

later used at Oxford University as a textbook. He was especially interested in primitive people's medicinal plants and healing methods. I was excited for him and expressed how wonderful it would be to go to a new country and start fresh. America had for me always been the Land of Opportunity, a place where you could go from poverty to riches in no time, but too far away to make it possible for regular people to travel.

When Brocken heard that I was interested in going, he said: "If The Rockefeller Foundation is interested enough in me to give me a grant, I am sure they will pay for a secretary too, and you could be my secretary. I am convinced it will work. You don't have to do any secretary work for me, that's not what I want, you can do your own thing after you are there." I answered that it would be fine with me, I didn't mind working either, I could always type his scripts for him. We talked in the vein of going, and more and more I thought it would be a wonderful opportunity for me to get away. Whenever I thought of returning to Norway, I shuddered. I didn't want to go back, I wanted to go forward.

After the play and the run-in with his boss, we started to include Kris in our plans, and he began to be interested too. But he always had the negative thought: "What can I do there, I can't do anything but act, and I can't act in English." Brocken meant he could do anything that had to do with staging, and since

we planned on going directly to California, he would be able to work in the theater. Thinking about it now, it was rather a wild idea. Brocken was the Pied Piper and we were his followers. He promised us gold and green pastures and we believed him, I because I really wanted to get away and wished it to be the way he described it, and Kris because he didn't think he had any other way out. He was pretty depressed about the play and the way his hopes had turned against him. He also didn't really believe that it would happen; we would never get the necessary papers to make it possible.

Our lives had been so hectic lately that I started to get headaches, and Brocken thought I needed to have some time away from everybody. I felt I was being dragged in several directions and I was getting more and more nervous, I wrung my hands constantly and jumped every time someone talked to me. I thought it was a good idea for me to get away both from Brocken and Kris; Brocken because I sometimes felt he was too much for me, and Kris to see if I could be without him. I decided on a place up in the hills in the northern part of Sweden, and ordered a room for a week. I was looking forward to being by myself and have time to think and not worry.

Kris and Brocken saw me off at the railroad station. After a four hour trip I was there, and someone from the Inn met me. It was only a few days before Christmas and a hefty snowfall made

everything bright white and beautiful. The sun was shining which it doesn't do very often at that time of the year. I borrowed a pedomotive sleigh to familiarize myself with my surroundings. It was almost as exhilarating as skiing. I treasured the time by myself and was looking forward to more of the same.

The next day the train brought Kris. I could hardly believe my eyes when I saw him walking toward me. I knew that walk instantly, fast and energetic, as if he were on top of the World.

"Why are you here?" I asked.

"I couldn't let you be by yourself so far away," he laughed. "Aren't you glad to see me?"

"The idea was for me to be alone," I tried not to sound irritable.

"That wasn't your idea," he answered, "that was Brocken's idea. If you don't want me here, I can go back."

"Where are you going to stay?"

"With you, of course."

"Not in my room. Remember, this is a small community and I want to be looked upon as a respectable lady."

"If you want me to stay, I'll get a room," he said. "Make up your mind."

Of course he stayed. And we had fun. We went ped-sleighbing every day. He was kicking and running with the sleigh, and I was sitting on the seat in front of him.

It was only a few days to Christmas, and we had made big plans some time ago, when we still had money. I had invited all our friends from the Norwegian Club to a party, and Brocken and Kris had also invited friends. But when we came back from our week in the country, we were broke. I couldn't exchange any money before January, and Brocken had a hard time collecting for his articles, because the editors were out of town on Christmas vacation. There was no money to be had before next year. I was to meet Brocken in town the day before Christmas. He was going to try one more place to see if he could get some money. He was sure he could, it had never failed before.

The minute I saw him coming toward me I knew he was defeated. He started stuttering as soon as he saw me and the story was the same, the editor was out of town.

"B-b-b-b-b-but I h-h-h-have an idea," he finally managed to say, and still stuttering he went on: "There is a grocery store where we live, I have charged there once in a while when I didn't have money, and I have paid them. I don't owe them anything. They know me there, and I am sure they will let us have what we need for the party, and we can pay them after we get money."

"Do you really think they will do that?"

"I am sure they will, let's go."

We stopped to talk to some friends and told them we would see them the next day. "I am short of cash," I said. "Are you in the money, can you lend me some?" I didn't expect them to say yes, but thought it wouldn't hurt to try. They didn't have any, and I hailed a taxi. I had barely enough for the fare, but we needed to get to the grocery store before it closed. Years later one of the friends we had met said that he never forgot how I in one minute asked to borrow money, and in the next hailed a taxi for my last pennies. It made a lasting impression on him.

The grocery store owner was very friendly and eager to sell us everything we wanted. Brocken suggested that we charge enough so that we had food over the holidays, and we bought hams and salamis, cheeses and canned goods, fruits and vegetables, candy and cakes, cookies and bread, and the bill came to almost one month's rent. We stocked up on all our needs. The money to pay for it all would have to come from somewhere.

Christmas came and went, and we ate well during the Holidays. Right after the New Year things started to slide. Brocken was in trouble. He couldn't pay his rent, the grocery owner was after him to pay the bills, and since he hadn't paid the installments on his furniture, the store had threatened to

repossess it all. He came storming over to me one morning, and stuttered and stammered out that if the grocery store owner came to my door asking for him, I didn't know where he was. He had barely said it when the bell rang. Brocken hid in my bedroom, and when I opened the door, there was the store owner.

"I hate to bother you, but do you know where Mr. Brock-Utne is? I have tried to get him and he is never home, is he out of town?"

"I think he is," I said hesitantly. "Why would I know?"

"You came in together to buy food, and he said he would be back right after the New Year to pay, but I haven't seen him."

"Oh yes," I said. "We had the party. I am sure he will pay you when he comes back. Don't worry, if I see him first, I'll tell him."

"What's going to happen now?" I asked when we were alone again. "Why can't you get some money?"

He told me that this time was the worst time of the year to get money. The editors were all busy with other things, and the least on their minds was buying articles from free lance writers. In fourteen days he would be O.K., but in the meantime he had to avoid all creditors, and if I would tell everybody that he was out of town, he would appreciate it.

"We have to get the store owner some money," I said. "He is just a little guy, and he can't afford to give away his wares."

Brocken assured my that he would be the first to be paid when the time came.

I got hold of Kris and asked him if he thought he could exchange some more money. He said he could try. I had a few hundred kroner left of my supply, and if Kris could exchange them, I could pay some to the grocer so that we could get our affairs in order. Kris was told in the bank that if he wanted to exchange money, he would have to do it right away, because the bank would not take any N. kroner after a certain date. I was waiting outside for him, and he came running out to tell me.

"We better get Brocken right away," I said and went in a telephone booth to call him.

"Get all the N. kroner you can, and come down to the bank right away," I told him, and he immediately understood what was going on. We decided on a time and a meeting place.

A couple of hours later he came running. He had been able to locate a few thousand kroner, and Kris went to the bank and exchanged them. This time I said I would take care of the money. It was the last time we could exchange in the bank, we were glad that we got this last chance. I went to the grocer and paid half of the bill, and told him he would get the rest as soon as Brocken came back. Brocken took only enough for his rent, and assured us that in a week or two he would be O.K. again.

It was too late to rescue his furniture. The store came to take it away. The sad thing was that they took the beautiful table he had given me too. I wish I had bought it myself for I had kept up on my payments. I sometimes wondered about Brocken. It would not have been too difficult for him to keep up the payments on his furniture. It was as if he couldn't be bothered with the practical side of life, he was too absorbed in the theoretical and ideal life. He ended up with nothing, and it didn't seem to bother him. Apparently this was his way of life. He said he would have to move in to town again to a furnished apartment. A friend of his had one he could sub-let.

CHAPTER NINE

When 1944 rang in, I could hardly believe I had been in Sweden over one year, so much had happened. My math lessons would soon come to an end, the good doctor was going to Uppsala for a position at the University. I needed the math lessons to continue in chemistry lab, and Brocken said he would find me another teacher. Both of us still went to lab classes, a little incident, convinced me fully that Brocken experienced and sly trouble-shooter. One day he t by mistake he had put acid x in container y, and nothing, none of the experiments would turn out.

"You have to tell the teacher," I said, "Yu can't let t. go. Tell him before someone uses the acid and blows up the whole lab. Go ahead, right now."

Brocken looked foolish, and I saw him go toward the teacher. He whispered something in his ear. The teacher went to the acid container and tried an experiment. He tried several, and I was watching him instead of going on with my own work. I saw the teacher nodding to Brocken, and then he turned to the class and announced:

"Someone has mistakenly mixed acid x in this container." He held up the container. "If anyone has used any of the contents in this container, stop the experiment and discard it. It will not work. Mr. Brock-Utne was alert enough to discover it. We

are all thankful to him for detecting it before any real harm was done." He turned to Brocken and said, "Thank you, Mr. Brock-Utne, we are all very thankful to you."

Brocken stood there smiling while I almost collapsed. I couldn't believe he had the nerve to take credit for the discovery of his own mistake. When he came over to me, I whispered, "How could you do that?" He whispered back. "What did you want me to do? Tell him what a dummy I was?" I almost choked laughing, and could do nothing more in class that day.

So many things had happened during the year, and luckily the war had started its downhill road for the Germans. Brocken and I had both been in contact with the Swedish Government to free Rolle from Berg Concentration Camp. We had written a letter describing the living conditions in the camp, which were horrendous. When my brother and the others first arrived at Berg, there was no camp, not even barracks. They had to build the shelters themselves during the cold winter months. There were no places for them to eat the little bit of food they got, and no places to relieve themselves. Water was not provided for them either; they survived because they willed themselves to survive. Because the camp had Norwegian staff, the captives were not treated quite as badly as they would have been had the Germans been in charge.

One day a letter from the State Department arrived, stating that if they had proof that Rolle had been born in Sweden, they would demand that he be released as a Swedish Citizen. "But he wasn't born in Sweden," I said to Brocken. "Did you tell them that he was born here?"

"Yes," he answered, "Your Mother was born here, and that should make him a Swedish citizen, so I told them he was. I didn't think they would ask for proof."

"What are we going to do now? What can we do?"

"I'll think of something," Brocken assured me. "We'll get him out."

Brocken had done research all his life, and he got permission from the authorities to conduct research in all the parishes around Stockholm. That gave him access to all the books containing births and deaths for as far back as the books had existed. He started looking for a name close to Rolle Dickman and a birthdate as well. It wasn't easy, but as Brocken used to tell us every time he succeeded in something, "The difficult tasks take time. The impossible tasks take a little longer time."

After months of research Brocken came to me one day with a big happy smile, and told me the following: He had found a name that by a little artistic work could easily be made over to read Rolle Dickman, and the birthdate could also easily be altered. He would get some supplies and go back the next day to see what he could do.

He went back the following day. It was dark in the room, which was to his advantage. The parish clerk was busy reading in another room while Brocken did his art work. He had to let it dry a couple of days, and he said goodbye to the clerk and told him that he would be back in a couple of days. The clerk nodded. He couldn't have been less interested.

Two days later Brocken was back in the parish, presumably doing some more research. He let a little time elapse before he made a loud exclamation sound. He acted very excited when he went out to the clerk and asked him to come in and witness something for him. Would he please attest to the fact that Rolle Dickman had been born January 10, 1912. Brocken took out a form he had brought with him, filled out the necessary information, and signed the form. Then he asked the clerk to attest that Rolle Dickman had indeed been born in that parish. He had no trouble getting the clerk's signature. He showed me the signed paper, very satisfied with himself for his deed. I was more than ever convinced that Brocken was a genius, and that his innovative ideas were without boundaries.

Together we composed an impassioned letter to the State Department, and implored them to do something in a hurry before it was too late for the Swedish citizen who had wrongfully been imprisoned by the nazis. I don't remember how many letters we wrote back and forth, but one morning I got a telephone call

from the State Department.

"Your brother has been released from Berg. He will arrive on the train tomorrow night," the voice said, and all I could answer was:

"Is it true, is he really coming, is it for real?"

The voice assured me that it was true, he was really coming. The phone rang again, and it was Brocken. He knew about it already, and very excitedly he said:

"If you take the train which leaves in an hour you can get to the border and meet your brother when he comes in the morning."

"I'll tell Kris and we will be there, I am sure he wants to go with me."

"Do you mind if I go on the train, too," he asked? "I will not be in your way. I only want to eat on the train. It is so long since I have eaten in a train dining car, and those used to be my grandest times. I would like to do that just once more while they still have dining cars on the trains."

I laughed and told him we would meet him at the station. He said he would get the tickets ahead of time, and we could just hop on the train. And he would order lunch for the three of us. This was an event that deserved to be celebrated.

Kris had been staying with me lately but had still kept his room in town. We discussed what we would do if my brother moved

in with me, and agreed on waiting with the decision until later. We got to the train in time and excitedly greeted Brocken. He had bought round-trip tickets for Kris and me to the border and back, but only to the middle of the country for himself. Kris and I would find a hotel and stay the night and be on the platform when my brother arrived.

We had an excellent meal in the train dining room. And it turned out that it was our last real meal on a train. I shudder when I compare the train service they have these days and what it was like then. The dining car had a rich and elegant atmosphere, snow white table-cloths and fancy formed napkins, good silverware and china, even crystal glasses. The better restaurants in which we had dined in Stockholm had nothing better. The service was also elegant: two waiters with their white napkins draped over their arms, scraping and bowing and treating us as royally. No wonder Brocken wanted to eat in the dining car. The lunch was perfect; expensive, but worth every penny.

Brocken got off in the middle of the country, and we went on for another three to four hours. It was late afternoon when we got off the train at the border. A bailiff asked for our border passes, and we told him we had called ahead and they would be in the rural mayor's office. I explained why we were there, and the bailiff escorted us to the mayor's office to get our passes. The mayor was friendly and gave us a pass for three days.

When we asked where we could get a hotel room, he laughed and said there were no hotels there. Kris and I looked at each other in horror, but said we would be sitting on a bench because we had to meet my brother.

The mayor explained that this used to be a camp for service men, but they were gone. They had left behind the barracks that the mayor now used as a jail. But there was no one in jail, the barracks were empty, and if we wanted to, we could use them. The bailiff gave us an empty barrack and sheets and towels and soap. There must have been at least 30 to 40 beds in there, and we found ourselves a place in one of the corners. It was an unreal experience being in a large empty barrack. I had never been in any barracks. The only ones I had seen had been in the movies. The bailiff assured me that I would have privacy, and he showed us where the toilets were. He never questioned Kris' presence, and for that I was grateful. We made ourselves comfortable and were glad and thankful to have a bed to sleep in. I'll never forget the kindness of the mayor and the bailiff at that border.

One thing I remember from that night. I was miserable. I had menstrual cramps and no supplies. I had to use towels. Kris was kindness himself. He made everything as easy as possible for me and for the first time I felt that I had someone to lean on emotionally and practically. It was a feeling I needed in the state of mind I found myself. I could let myself

go. I didn't need to be brave any more. I could just be the frightened little girl I was on the inside, and someone would take care of me. I didn't have those moments very often; therefore I remember this one well.

The next morning we did our toilet and cleaned the barracks after us, and went out to find some breakfast. There was only one place, not too good, but we weren't very hungry. We tried the best we could to make time to go more fast so that we could meet the train at 2:00 p.m. It was only nine in the morning and for five hours we had nothing to do but wait. We walked around the station, but it was so cold we didn't go far. We sat in the barracks, walked out again. We had nothing to read, nothing to talk about, nothing to do but look at each other and look at the station clock. I tried to wait a while between each time I looked at the clock, but it still was only one minute later.

Finally it was two o'clock and we heard the train in the distance. It seemed like an eternity before it stopped. People started to get out, and I looked for Rolle. Kris hopped on the train to look for him there. It took some time before I realized that everybody had left the platform, and the train had started to move. Rolle wasn't there! At first I couldn't believe he hadn't come. I was numb. Then I started to cry. Kris put his arms around me and said: "Please don't cry, he will be here tomorrow." The station master came over and said the same thing.

"They have only got their days mixed up. He will be here tomorrow." I stopped crying, but thought to myself that he would never come. The Germans had done something horrible to him.

The officials let us stay again in the barracks. Tomorrow came, and the day after tomorrow, and I patiently waited for Rolle to get off the train. In my heart of hearts, though, I didn't believe I would ever see him again. The three-day passes expired, and nobody on the border had the authority to give us an extension, so we had to take the train back to Stockholm. We had called Brocken, and he met us. He assured me over and over again that it was only a matter of days before Rolle would come, but I didn't believe him. I told Brocken and Kris that I wanted to be by myself and went back to my apartment alone. There I brooded all night, and fell into a troubled sleep in the morning.

I was awakened by the telephone. At first I didn't want to answer, but the phone kept on ringing until I was awake enough to answer. "Hi, Tulla," said a familiar voice.

"Rolle, is it really you? Where are you?" I exclaimed. "Is it really you?"

"Yes, it is me," he answered in his usual calm, gentle way. "I am at the border. The station master told me you were here. You should have waited a little longer," he chuckled.

"Oh, I have waited so long. I'll meet you midway, look for me at Ørebro. Oh, I can't believe it has happened. How are you?"

Are you all right?"

"I am fine, and I will be looking for you."

He had come with a local train from Oslo, and had to wait for the regular train to Stockholm. I called Kris and Brocken to meet me at the train station. It was hard to believe that after all this time I would see my brother. He was free, and he said he was O.K. He was in Sweden. I called Rose, and she wanted us all to come to her place and eat when Rolle arrived. But I told her it would be better if she met us at the station. We could go home to my place. I didn't want too much confusion right away. I knew my brother. He hated fuss. I ran to the corner store for food. Everything in the apartment was ready to receive him. Fortunately I had two bedrooms, and a bed was ready for him. I was very nervous.

Kris went with me again. He assured me he would be in the background, but he didn't want me to go by myself. I was glad to have company. This time I had taken some reading materials and the time didn't seem so long. Örebro is the place where the trains meet, coming and going, so when we were there, I hopped off the train and started to look for Rolle. I didn't have to look long. I saw him coming toward me. I threw my arms around him and hugged him, and hugged him again. Then I started to look him over. I checked his hands. They looked O.K. I had heard horror stories about torn out finger nails and crushed hands, but

he looked fine. Then I checked his eyes and face and ears and asked him to walk so that I could see if he limped.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

"Just checking to see if everything is in order."

We boarded the train and I introduced Kris. It was a little difficult. I didn't know quite what to say. This is my friend or This is my fiance - or This is the guy I am sleeping with. I finally told my brother that he was to make his home with me, and Kris lived there too. Rolle understood.

CHAPTER TEN

A couple of weeks after Rolle came, Nusse and little Terje arrived. They stayed with me in my apartment, and since there was not enough space for everybody, Kris moved out. Kris and Nusse did not take to each other at all. Luckily he still had kept his old place in Gamla Staden. I spent little time in the apartment. I had enough to keep me busy going to chemistry classes and taking private lessons in higher mathematics with a new teacher. Kris and I went back to meeting at the Norwegian Club, where our friends welcomed us, but where we now didn't feel the same attachment. We had tasted independence and had no heart to sit in a smoke-filled room playing bridge night after night. However, it was preferable to be there than having Nusse and Kris sparring all night. We were still seeing Brocken and Rose so our dependence on the Norwegian Club was not as absolute as before.

In my present math teacher, Bengt, I found a new life-long friend. As soon as he opened the door for Brocken and me, I noticed his penetrating, bright eyes, very blue. Each time he looked at me I had the feeling that his extraordinary eyes took me inside his head and made me part of his thought process. He was an extremely charming and inspiring teacher. I loved him from the moment we met, and I still do today.

Kris and I had been talking about marriage, not too seriously from my side. Brocken kept harping on Kris making an honest woman out of me before he got his orders to go to England. He still had his Victorian sensibilities. I kept laughing at him for his old-fashioned ideas, but Kris listened to him and thought it would be a good idea for us to marry. We finally agreed that IF he got his orders to go to England, we would get married before he left. I didn't take it seriously. After all, Kris had been in Stockholm from 1941, it was now 1944, "Fat chance he would be drafted now," I thought. I was definitely not ready for marriage.

I had a part time job at the Norwegian Legation for the season. The times had changed, and with it the political climate. The refugees were finally treated with respect, and a position at the Legation had become of esteemed value. It was good for me to have a job. A steady respectable income added to the little I made by writing, it was stabilizing, and I had learned to take better care of money. Brocken didn't like the idea of me working in an office. I should be free to use my time to be more intellectually productive, but I liked to have routine to my life, although I admit that after I had learned the job, the work wasn't very stimulating.

We had heard stories of the heroic efforts by the Norwegian Resistance Workers to destroy the heavy water plant in Rjukan,

and we were delighted at the way the Underground had fooled the Germans. Heavy water was used for atomic energy, and the plant at Rjukan was heavily guarded by the Germans. But they only guarded the front part of the plant, because the back of the building lay against a steep mountainside which no human being could climb. So they believed. But the Norwegian boys outsmarted them, and one dark night they came down the steep mountain and blew up the whole plant. Some of the heroes were now in Sweden. I knew that I would meet them sooner or later and was looking forward to it. I wondered if they belonged to the same group my heroes did. I had heard rumors that they too were coming here.

It was late March when Kris got his orders to be at the Norwegian training camp in fourteen days. We had made no preparation for marriage. We knew we needed birth certificates before we could get a license, but that was out of the question for us, of course, for we couldn't get them from Norway. It seemed that the marriage plans would stop before they got a chance to start, but Brocken wouldn't let that happen and came to the rescue. He went to the license bureau and told them a tear dripping story of two refugees who loved each other, who had no family left, who needed to get married before the man went off to war. But a bureaucrat is hard to convince, and he kept saying we needed birth certificates.

"But they are here, they exist, they are alive, they'll come

down here and show you that they are here. You don't need a certificate to see that," Brocken at last shouted. "The lady is pregnant. They need to get married. Have a heart."

Brocken won, and triumphantly came to us waving the paper. When he told us what had happened, he was embarrassed to tell me how he had managed to get the paper and stuttered so much that his speech became unintelligible. After he calmed down he finally managed to tell me that the clerk believed I was pregnant. He excused himself profoundly for telling that lie, but I just laughed at him and said:

"It worked, didn't it. I don't care. It could have been true."

There were blood tests to get, witnesses to line up, rings to buy, a time for a judge to marry us, and for Kris there was packing to do. Brocken would stand up for Kris, but I had nobody. Ida had just married, and she hadn't invited me to the wedding, so she was out of the question. Rose would make too much fuss and ruin the whole occasion. I didn't want her. Most of my refugee friends were men. The one girl in the group had finally gotten a job. Brocken again had the idea. He knew that Dora worked in the same building where we would be married. Maybe she could take time off to be Maid of Honor. We contacted her and she promised to be there. She was the one who had told me about the Norwegian Club and felt responsible for getting us together.

Kris had to take time out to get a blood test, but he didn't have time to go looking for rings, so he left that up to Brocken and me. We measured his finger and broke our piggy bank, the only money we had left. It was enough for a couple of thin 18 karat plain rings. We ordered the rings with inscriptions in them, but were told we had to come back for that, there wasn't enough time.

I had to tell Rolle, and I thought that would be easy. But he hit the ceiling. He begged me to wait until Kris came back from the war and had a decent job to offer me. He felt it was all wrong to marry in such a hurry. We just didn't know what we were getting ourselves into. I was hurt that he would take it that way, but all it did was to convince me I was doing the right thing. He asked if he could talk to Kris, and I agreed, but I knew that wouldn't help. I think this was the only disagreement Rolle and I had ever had, and I dreaded the conversation between him and Kris. It wasn't pleasant. Kris didn't shout, for which I was grateful, but he didn't like the whole conversation. It seemed nobody but Brocken liked the idea of us getting married. When Kris told his sister Mary about our plans, she had not been too happy either. Would he really marry a Jew?

We had set the date in the beginning of April. On the first of April I dressed to go to the lab. My outfit was a bit strange - a pink silk dress which had seen better days - but it

was the only old clothing I owned, and I had used it in the lab before. I put on wool stockings and heavy walking shoes. After I had dressed I discovered a big hole on my stocking heel, but it was too late to change. The most noticeable of my attire was a large bandage on the two first fingers of my right hand. The day before I had picked up a Bunsen burner with my two fingers, and burned myself brutally, because I had held on to the burner until I could put it safely down. It had hurt a lot but was feeling better, and it didn't stop me from going to class.

Right before I was leaving, the phone rang. It was Kris. He sounded upset.

"I have to report Monday morning at 9a.m. one week early," he said. "If we are going to get married, we'd better do it today."

"I'll call Brocken," I said. "Be in touch."

Brocken was ready to take action, and I went to the Legation to see if I could get my check before it went out in the mail. What took place could have been a scene from a farce. Nobody believed me when I said I was getting married. They thought it was an April 1st joke. I went through several offices before I caught up with the checks in the mail-room, ready to go out. After some serious pursuing I convinced the people in the mail-room that I needed my check. They believed I needed the money, but they didn't believe the marriage story. I was allowed to go through the mail until I found my check. "Wish me luck," I

said and ran to the bank to cash the check, then to pick up the rings.

I had been in touch with Brocken, he had got the judge for 1 p.m., and Dora had said she would be there. I felt like I had been running all morning and didn't feel much like a bride. Surely I didn't look like one, nevertheless this was my wedding day. I reached the judge's office out of breath.

There were several couples in the judge's waiting room wanting to take the marriage vows, and at least one of the girls was pregnant. Dora handed me a little bouquet of flowers. Kris looked stricken when he realized he had forgotten to get me flowers. He looked and acted extremely nervous. I had been too busy to think about the situation, but Kris had done some thinking and was very serious. I had never seen him like that before and asked if he had second thoughts. If he had said yes, it wouldn't have made much difference to me at that time. I would just have walked out of there. But he denied having second thoughts, and then it was too late. We were next. The ceremony was short and swift. The judge held a nice little speech - and we were married.

After the ceremony I told them I had money and we could go out for dinner that evening, but I wanted to go home and clean up and change my clothes. Dora offered us her apartment for the

week-end. She could stay with her friend, which she wanted to do in any case. We thankfully accepted the offer. Before I went home, I called Rolle and told him I was married. He didn't say much.

When I came home, Terje was screaming unmercifully while Rolle was trying to change diapers. Nusse was in bed crying hysterically. Rolle and I hugged but didn't talk. I hurriedly took a shower, packed a little bag and changed into my prettiest clothes. Terje didn't stop screaming all the time I was there. I never found out what was wrong with him. I always wondered why Nusse couldn't find it in her heart to make my wedding day a little less tense.

We met at Dora's. Her apartment was spotless, and she assured us that the sheets were clean and we shouldn't worry about changing them when we left, she would take care of it. I was grateful for her thoughtfulness.

The dinner at Grand Hotel was in style, we ordered champagne and Kris ordered long stemmed red roses to be delivered at the table. The food was excellent and we had a good time. We spent every penny we had and didn't have a thought for what tomorrow would bring. I knew I would manage. Kris would get an allowance for being married, and between my paycheck and his allowance I would be fine.

I hadn't told Aunt Rose that I was married, and I knew I would have to. I called her from the lobby. She cried a little and said I should have told her, she would have been with me. She congratulated me and was very sweet about the whole thing now that it was too late to stop me.

We spent our honeymoon in Dora's apartment. There was nothing to do, and I was very bored. The only reading material we had was the daily newspaper. Kris read the newspaper, and I sat. It was the week-end. Nothing was open, and even if it had been, we had no money to spend. We couldn't go visiting. That would look strange, and since we had lived together for so long before, the "honeymoon" phrase was just a farce. We avoided talking. He was not going on any picnic, and we didn't know if we would ever see each other again. Not ever, before the honeymoon and after have I been so utterly bored. Strangely enough, Kris doesn't remember it that way.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

After Kris left, I went back to my apartment again. The atmosphere was lighter than the last time I had been there. Nusse hugged me and congratulated me, Terje was adorable and smiling. I changed into my chemistry clothes, the pink dress again, and went to class. I saw Kris once more before he left, at the camp. It was hard to say goodbye, so we pretended not to. We just hugged a lot.

I realized that it would be impossible for me to live with Rolle and Nusse. They needed to be by themselves and so did I. They took over my apartment. Rolle had by this time got a job in the military making uniforms and could afford to keep the place and get some furniture. They stayed there for a couple of months, then they moved too. I went house-hunting and sub-let a nice apartment for a few months. It was hard to get a permanent place in Stockholm in those days. Brocken had managed to get a furnished apartment in the older part of the city, where the rent was lower and the apartments not so nice, but it was permanent and he was tired of moving so often. He was satisfied, but I didn't like his place much.

Kris called me from camp one day and asked if I could house Otto, one of his friends from Norway. He was coming to Stockholm to see his fiance, Vera, but they had no place for him

to sleep and would I take him in. I said yes, of course, and such started a friendship that lasted all of Otto's life. He died from cancer a few years ago. We still see Vera when we go to Norway. Friends - true friends - are wonderful people to have around.

I missed Kris - especially when I walked the streets of Stockholm and envisioned him coming toward me with his special forceful walk and smiling face, so full of life and energy. Even today when he carries a load full of instruments and music, his walk is cheerful and fast, always in a hurry to do what he loves the most - teach. Of course I missed him, but fortunately I had Brocken. Kris had asked him to look after me; Brocken had promised and took it literally - he was a constant presence.

Lately Brocken had been talking about writing a book, but it had been mostly talk, and one day I told him we were going to it. I would type while he dictated. My temporary job at the Legation was finished, and when they offered me another one, I said I would take a few months off before I started again. So I had time to spare and wanted to use it. We worked on his book about three hours a day and were almost finished - all he needed was a little research so that he could be sure of his facts. The book was about Palestine (now Israel) and why the land really belonged to the Jews. It was interesting for me to get historical facts which I had not had before. Unfortunately

Brocken never finished his research, or he could have had the book published in a minute. But he was too busy doing philanthropic work. He felt that this was his duty as long as the war was going on. I thought he should do both.

There was always push from Brocken that I should write my own book, and I started thinking about it more and more as I sat there typing for him. I had not seriously considered it before, but typing someone else's book changed my mind. I could be typing for myself. I felt I really had a story to tell. It helped me emotionally to talk about myself, and Brocken listened. Before I met him nobody had been interested enough in me to listen, and I was not a talker. Now I found myself talking non-stop about my thoughts and my experiences, and the interest he showed was intensely encouraging. The more I talked, the more determined I became to write it down, and as soon as I was through typing Brocken's book, I started on my own.

Being a poor sleeper, I was up at four or five in the mornings, but instead of reading in bed, I got up and started to write. It was the best time of the day to concentrate, everything quiet, no telephones to disturb the train of thought. I set myself a minimum limit, at least ten pages a day. Whether I liked what I had written or not was immaterial, I could always weed out what I didn't like later. The apartment I had rented had a large corner living-room with lots of windows. I liked it

and felt comfortable there. I had leased it to the end of the summer, and by that time I figured my book would be finished.

The rest of the day I didn't do much. Brocken and I ate out most of the time. Occasionally I would cook a meal, but mostly I subsisted on bread and cheese. The chemistry class was over, and I knew that was not going to be my life commitment. There wasn't enough money for math lessons, and since I no longer needed them, I quit going. Bengt and I had become close friends, however, and he had started to drop in after dinner quite often. Brocken was always there as a watchdog; we would talk far into the night. There weren't many topics in the world that we missed. It was a stimulating period of my life.

Sometimes I wondered how Bengt was able to leave his wife so many nights, but I didn't ask. I was glad to see him; that was all that mattered. He told me later that he and his wife had nothing in common but the children. They had married early and had children right away, and because of their children their marriage was founded in cement, he thought. Since I also was married, and my husband was off to war, our attraction for each other had to be harnessed, but the pleasure of spending time together was not to be curbed.

We talked a lot about America and our future dreams. Kris had asked his friend Gertrud if she would write him a letter of

recommendation to go with his application, which she did. At the moment all our applications and accompanying papers were in the American Legation, and we could do nothing but wait. Brocken had written a letter of recommendation for me, and he got his friend Trygve Lie to write one for him. Trygve Lie later became the first General Secretary for the United Nations. He was very generous in letting us using his name when we needed.

Since Kris was now in Scotland, we thought we would have to wait with our America plans until the war was over, but by talking about it several ideas popped up, and one of them was having our own ship. We wouldn't need to wait for passage. We could pick up Kris as soon as the war was over and be on our way. Our way of thinking was of course very unrealistic, but at the time it seemed we could cut through all bureaucracy at will, because so far everything we had tried had succeeded. We talked and dreamed of having our own ship, and Bengt dreamed with us, although he knew it would be impossible for him to go. We would come to America, form a new society where work would be mandatory until age 40, but from then on we could do with our lives what we had always desired. The trouble with me was that I didn't know what I really wanted to do with the rest of my life.

We were Utopians, of course, and our goal was obscure. Any sociologist could have told us that our ideas were at best vague and not in any way realistically developed. Brocken stated that

the characteristics of the Utopian is not that one claims to have the right idea, but that one survives with ideas and dreams intact and conquers all the obstacles when trying to get one's ideas across. It sounded far-fetched to me, but who was I to contradict this genius with his long row of achievements behind him?

At the end of the summer I had the finished manuscript in my hands. It had been edited several times and typed four times. I had done what I had set out to do. I had accomplished something all by myself and for a while I felt elated. Brocken, who knew all the publishers in town, was going to act as my agent. When he read the whole manuscript, he was convinced that I would get it published. I wasn't as optimistic as he was, but at least I had written a book; I had finished a project I had set myself. I discovered that I liked to write, but also that it was hard work. And, of course, nothing sounded the way I wanted it to sound, I had read a lot, and I knew what good literature was. But this wasn't a literate book. It was just a story of a young girl, written by a young and inexperienced writer in simple language. My only hope was that a publisher would find the story appealing enough to consider it worth publishing. I hadn't told anybody but Brocken that I had written a book, I hadn't even told Kris or Bengt. I wouldn't do that before the book was accepted, and if it never got accepted, nobody needed to know. If it was accepted, I knew I would be in the spotlight and criticized unmercifully. There was time enough.

During the time I waited for my book to be accepted, I was house-hunting. I was sad to give up the lovely apartment I had been renting, and nothing like it was to be had. I finally rented a room and bath in somebody's flat. It was fairly private and had access to a telephone but not to the kitchen. I didn't like the living conditions, but under the circumstances I tried to make it work. I soon discovered that access to telephone did not mean what was promised - access. The telephone was supposed to be located in the hallway right outside my door, but more often than not it was located in the living-room. That meant that I either did not get my telephone calls or, when I heard the phone ringing and nobody answered, I went into the living-room and took it myself when I expected a call. That was neither acceptable to the landlady nor me, and there was friction from the start.

At one of our weekly discussion group meetings, I met a young student of science, Gunnar, who immediately took a liking to me. He wasn't more than 21 years old, but his ideas and knowledge were far more mature. I can't recall what the discussion was about, but I do remember that we disagreed about some of his ideas. When time came for the group to break up, he asked if he could see me home. I told him that I came with Brocken and he would see that I got home O.K. Gunnar asked Brocken if he could see me home, and Brocken thought I needed to be around younger people so he consented. That was a mistake.

When we came into the hallway of my building, he asked to see me to the door, but I told him no and said good-night. Gunnar either didn't believe me, or he was overcome with desire, because he grabbed hold of me and wouldn't let go. I hated to scream and make a scene, and fought him off the best I could. I told him to let go of me. I told him I wasn't interested because I was married. But nothing could stop him. At last I gave him one last warning, if he did not let go, I would scream. He finally understood that I meant what I said, and he left. I had never before met a man who didn't take no for an answer, and never wanted to see him again.

The next morning I called Brocken and told him what had happened. The next discussion group was to be in my room, and I asked that Gunnar be excluded. Brocken was crushed because he thought he had let both me and Kristian down. He had promised Kris to take care of me, and hadn't. As usual he got me laughing at his old-fashioned ideas. When I met him later, he told me that Gunnar had been to see him and was so ashamed of what had happened. He wanted Brocken to put in a good word for him, and did not want to be denied coming to the discussion groups because of this incident. He said he had been drinking some wine, and since he was not used to drinking, it had gone right to his head.

The following day, quite early in the morning there was a knock on my door and when I opened, Gunnar was outside with a bouquet of flowers in his hand. He begged me to let him talk a few minutes. I didn't want to let him in, shook my head and asked him to leave. But here again I was caught in not wanting to make a scene. Another door opened and the land-lady came out. I let him in and asked what he had to say.

As intense as he had been in persuing me that night, so he was in begging me to forgive him for his obnoxious behavior. To get rid of him I said he could come to the discussion group, I didn't care one way or the other. He promised to leave me alone. It seemed to me that brilliant minds quite often had personal behavior problems, and I vowed to stay away from him. He does, however, deserve a chapter of his own later.

The land-lady gave me one month's notice and wrote a nasty letter where she said I was more of a nuisance to have in the house than she had expected and implied that I was loose and had too many men visiting me. I confronted her about her insulting letter and said I would be moving as soon as I found another place. I also wanted money back from the day I moved until the end of the month. She refused and I told her she would hear from my lawyer.

When I told Brocken, he was furious, and he wrote a letter to the land-lady's husband, a lawyer, and told him that if I didn't instantly get a letter of apology from his wife, we would go to court and sue for defamation of my name. Before we heard from the husband, I had moved into a hotel and stored my furniture. Not long after I moved a letter of apology plus the money for the remaining days arrived, and that was the end of my renting a room anyplace.

Now started a period where I moved from hotel to hotel. The city had a law that prohibited permanent residence in hotels; three days were the limit of any stay. I didn't have much baggage, one suitcase plus my typewriter and manuscripts, but it was a nuisance to move that often. Not much work was accomplished, but fortunately, not much work was needed for the time being. My manuscript made its rounds. Brocken didn't say much and I didn't ask.

But there was light at the end of the tunnel, and one day a jubilant Brocken showed up at my door with a large bouquet of flowers and even larger box of candy.

"What is going on? I exclaimed. "Have you won the lottery?"

"It's better than that. Your book is being published. I thought you should have flowers and candy on this day." Then he started stammering: "I am s-s-so s-s-sorry I didn't have any m-m-money today, so I had to put it on your b-b-bill."

I had been lying on my bed in a depressed stage when he entered my room. I hadn't bothered to dress and eat and had hardly looked up when he first entered, but with such news, my mood changed, and when he told me how he got the flowers and candy, he had me laughing. I was stunned over the news. I didn't know what to say or do, so I did nothing. He told me to get ready so that we could go and meet the publisher. The sad news was timing. It was too late in the year to get it published when all the new books arrived on the scene, but it would be published in early 1945. I thought that was fine. It would give me time to get used to the fact that I had written a book which was going to be published.

CHAPTER TWELVE

We constantly talked about the trip to America and the ship we wanted to buy. When it became known that we were looking for a ship, several people wanted to go with us, some of them scientists. One day Ture showed up. He told us that he was a former captain and knew about ships. He needed the work, his wife was expecting a child, and he wanted us to hire him. We didn't have any money for wages, but Brocken said if he could find a suitable ship for us, we would think about hiring him.

"How can we hire him?" I asked. "We have no money. You can't lead the man on like that. His wife is having a child and he needs a job."

"Something will come up," Brocken said, "and if he can find a ship for us, the money will come too."

It didn't take long before Ture found a ship. He was so excited when he talked to us about it that we were ready to buy the ship on the spot. He had found a training-ship used by the Swedish Navy to train marines. It was in excellent condition, 32 feet long, 18 feet wide; it was lined with copper all around the bottom and could easily be made over to accommodate our needs. It was never questioned how Ture knew what our needs would be when we didn't know ourselves; he sounded very convincing and we were easily won over. He took us to see "Falken" and we fell in love with it from the beginning.

We soon had a daily dose of Ture. He borrowed money from us constantly, and we shared what we had. We met his wife, and she was big with child, at least eight months pregnant. When Ture asked for money, all we could see was his wife's colossal form craving for unusual foods, and we caved in. We realized we were getting too involved in his private life but didn't know what to do about it.

There was no money from the book yet, and there wouldn't be before the book was published and the expenses made. After that, if the book sold, I would get a little over 16% of the cost of the book. But before the book could be published, it had to be translated to Swedish, and the publisher asked me if I had any preferences. Brocken and I talked it over, and we both thought Bengt would be the perfect translator. We asked him, and he accepted on the grounds that I needed to explain exactly the meaning of each word.

Now started an association which turned out to be a treasure for the two of us. We spent as many hours working together as he could possibly spare from his teaching job and his family. Our working space was in the lobby of Grand Hotel where I lived for the time being, or in the hotel's coffee shop. Sometimes we used Brocken's apartment when he had other things to do. He was furiously writing articles to support himself, supply Ture with money, and augment my Grand Hotel living. Although I had the

cheapest room possible on the top floor, Grand Hotel was expensive, and my allowance from Kris alone could not take care of it. I made extra by writing short stories, but not enough to live in the style I did. Brocken's contributions made it possible for us to eat at good restaurants. When we didn't have cash, we ate at Grand Hotel and charged in on my bill, which was paid each week by combined funds. What we fumed about was that every time we were eating at Grand, Ture somehow knew we were there, and joined us uninvited. He then proceeded to order the most expensive food and drinks on the menu. Brocken finally decided to have a talk with him about that.

Brocken, who personally knew the manager of Grand Hotel, had explained my situation to him, and since my room was very small and on the top floor, the manager overlooked the requirement of the housing authorities for the time being and let me stay. I made full use of the hotel's facilities, especially the lobby. The time I lived in defined the great hotels by their lobbies. An elegant lobby meant a superior hotel, and no lobby was as grand as that of the Grand Hotel. After the war I learned that the lobby of Grand Hotel in Stockholm had been the spy center of the world, and it amused me to read about it. I had certainly been a constant figure in that lobby the Fall and Winter of 1944; I wondered if anybody had taken me to be a spy.

Bengt and I had fun translating my book. Never before or after has serious work been quite as gratifying. The pleasure of being alone together was in itself pure joy, and the labor of dissecting every sentence so that the significance of the sentiment did not get lost kept us on an intellectual high at all times. The excitement became so intense that we were reduced to sitting at the table sometimes looking into each other's eyes for a few minutes before we continued again. To turn and spin every word to get the right mood of the feelings or the meaning, became more of a game than work. I didn't want it to end, but we had a deadline to meet. I look back at those times with the greatest affection and yearning.

When the translation was over we had some time on our hands which we devoted to the ship. We wanted to buy Falken, but didn't have the ten thousand kroner needed, and were discarding idea after idea. We went away from our first intent, to have the ship go to America and sell it in dollars for what it would cost us to buy it in kroner. That was an excellent idea, some of our friends said, but why not go to the South Seas first? One scientist wanted to do research in primitive people's vegetation. I liked this dramatic change, and so did Brocken. He had been there before and wanted to go back. To have his own ship was just the dot over the i. But it was our first idea - to travel to America and sell the ship there - that got us the loan to buy it. Brocken took the loan in his name only. He didn't want

me to sign for anything. He said that he wouldn't want me to take any chances like that without Kris' consent, since he would also be responsible for whatever I signed. He got Bengt to co-sign for the bank loan instead. I hadn't yet said anything to Kris about the book. I intended to just send it to him as a surprise when it was published. I didn't tell him much about our ideas with the ship either, although I had told him we were looking to buy one.

After the ship was bought, we hired Ture and another Norwegian refugee Ulf, to rebuild it. We were allowed to house the ship free at a shipyard, which was going to put in a motor and check it out for us when all the rebuilding of the cabins was done. They had agreed to do the work now and be paid later when we sold the ship in America, a plan the management of the shipyard thought was excellent.

Ture and Ulf had been working on the ship one week when Brocken decided he'd better go down to the shipyard to see how the work was coming. During that week Brocken had me believe that I would be the captain of the ship.

"But I don't know anything about sailing a ship," I answered. "How do you figure?"

"If you have a First Mate who knows how to handle the ship, all you have to do is to stay on the sidelines and give orders," he assured me. "I think we should go out and buy you a Captain's suit."

"You don't figure Ture for the First Mate?" I asked.

He assured me that it would not be Ture, and I was easily convinced that I would indeed be the captain in name only. I had fun looking for a white suit and a captain's hat. Fortunately it was out of season and I didn't find anything, but was told to come back in the spring. Even if I was not a real captain, I saw myself in my day-dreams walking around the ship in a snow white uniform having a great time. No thoughts were given to how the uniform would be kept pressed and snow-white, since I had no experience in domestic tasks; nor was any thought given to weather situations and the difficulties of twenty people living together in such limited space.

In our discussions about the future our dreams and wishes played the greater part. The question of money was always actual. Where would we get it until the ship had been sold. We had to have money to pay a crew, for food and provisions, for upkeep of the ship as long as it was in our hands. The 10,000 kroner wasn't going to cover more than the rebuilding of the ship.

One idea was to use the ship as transportation of wares, and every sort of article was mentioned. One high on our list was ammunition. I can't believe now that we really discussed the possibility of transporting ammunition from Sweden to England

while the war was still on, but we seriously did. Nobody mentioned the danger of sailing through mined waters, and we thought we could easily get the Resistance Workers to help us buy ammunition from Sweden.

Our plans to make a scientific expedition to the South Seas before we went to the U.S.A. to sell the ship seemed to stick. Brocken's studying in that part of the world in his youth helped decide our destination. We started to execute our plans and put an ad in the paper encouraging interested scientists to get in contact with us. We told the people who had already asked to be included to put in an application. We would only be able to accommodate a limited number, eight or ten scientists, and the ad asked for people who knew about sailing a ship. We fully intended to have a motor onboard the ship, but the sailing sounded both romantic and cost cutting. Brocken kept reminding us that "The World is made up of Practical Dreamers", and we believed we were just that.

I had written Kris that if I didn't find a decent place to live, I would live on the ship when it was done, and he wrote me an angry letter back, telling me that he forbade me to live on that ship. It was not a safe place for me to live, the harbor was no place for a woman alone, and so on. I could agree with his concerns, but forbid me? Who did HE think he was to forbid me anything? I was so upset that I decided I would not write him

back. Brocken only groaned when I told him. Later on he agreed with Kris that the harbor was no place to live for a woman alone.

When we briefly talked to Ture and Ulf in the evenings after they were through working, the answers they gave us weren't satisfactory enough to put us at ease, and that was one of the reasons Brocken decided to go down and see how the work was coming. He didn't want me to come with him, since Kris had so decidedly been against me being in the harbor, so I eagerly awaited his return after he had seen the ship. I knew the minute I saw him that something was wrong.

"What?" I asked. It took some time before he was calm enough to answer me.

"I h-had expected to see the b-beginning of a b-build-up, b-but instead they had ripped off the whole outside of the ship," he explained. "When I asked what they were doing, Ture said they had to tear down all the bad stuff, before the rebuilding could take place, but Ulf said that what they had taken off was all rotten."

"Ture said the ship was in a mint condition. Do you think he knows what he is doing?" I asked.

"I thought he did, but I am starting to doubt it now, we probably should have checked him out a little more than we did. Or we should have had a second opinion before we purchased the ship. We only can hope that things aren't as bad as they look. We will ask them later when they come for their money, today is payday," Brocken sighed.

When the men showed up, we drilled them all we could but didn't get much satisfaction. Ulf, whom I had known earlier, insisted that they had to break down all the rotten parts before they could start to build it up; Ture didn't say much. When we were alone Brocken recited a Norwegian proverb:

"We have taken Satan aboard, and now we have to row him ashore." We could do nothing more than continue what we were doing for the time being.

Another two weeks passed before Brocken went to the harbor again, and this time he was more upset:

"They have torn down the whole ship, I don't understand. It was supposed to be a good ship. I think Ture is doing this because he needs money. I don't think we can trust him. The money is running out, the ship is a wreck, no building is done at all. I don't think he knows how to build a ship."

Ture was indeed becoming a liability. Every time Brocken wrote an article and collected his advance, Ture would be there almost with an outstretched hand. He needed money incessantly. Brocken complained that the way the men worked, they should be worth their weight in gold. I told Brocken not to give him any more than the wages he had coming.

"But how can I?" Brocken protested. "He says his wife needs this and that, and any minute now she will deliver."

"We have to find ways not to be so involved," I sighed. "But I know it is hard."

We found a way of reaching each other without letting Ture know, by using certain signals when we called or rang the doorbell. It was a game in the beginning, but it soon become tiresome.

When we finally realized that the men we had hired didn't know what they were doing with the ship, Brocken fired them and went to the ship yard manager and told him the story. The manager agreed to take the ship the way it was and build it up for us, and we could pay after we sold the ship. That was a big relief to us.

With that worry pushed away for a while, we had another one. I had to move from Grand Hotel. Too many people knew I was living there permanently and the Manager said he regretted it very much, but he could no longer defy the city ordinance. I had to find another place to live. But there were none, and Brocken insisted that I take his apartment; he would find a room someplace. I didn't like his place. It smelled muggy and wasn't very attractive, but I hadn't much choice and agreed to move in there. I needed a place to write. The publisher demanded a couple of more chapters describing the life in Norway during the Occupation.

By now Rose knew about the book and was very excited. She had to know if she was in it. I tried to tell her that it was a

book of fiction and nobody I knew was portrayed in it. I had just taken bits and pieces of lives and put them together, although the actual happenings were true to life. I knew I would have a lot of explaining to do after the book came out, but I thought I could handle it.

I settled down in Brocken's place. At least it would be a steady place to live for a while. I knew I would miss the lobby of Grand Hotel, but Brocken said we could still meet there. And so my life changed again.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Since that disastrous first time Gunnar had walked me home, he had become one of the steady string of friends who showed up whenever they had time, so that in addition to the bi-weekly discussion groups, there was the almost daily get together of Brocken, Bengt and me, with Gunnar making regular appearances. It was now close to Christmas and Brocken, who wanted to do something special for me on New Year's Eve, had invited me to the Gala at Grand Hotel. I told him that the Gala included dancing and he didn't dance. It would be better if we did something else instead. But he was determined to entertain me. I needed younger people around, he stated, and he invited Gunnar to be my dancing partner. Since Brocken didn't want to sit by himself while we were dancing, he also invited Dora to join us.

The evening was enjoyable but left me with a little uneasy feeling. Brocken's devotion was absolute, and I took advantage of it. Rose had told me that people were talking, and that it was wrong of me to have Brocken on a string when I was already married. It didn't look good. *They will soon get more to talk about, I thought, but maybe she is right, maybe I should cool it with Brocken.* I told Brocken what Rose had said, and he immediately became concerned at the thought of giving me a bad name. We decided to see each other a little less for a while.

Gunnar was around a lot, and Bengt whenever he could. Once in a while Bengt and I even had a chance to be alone. One day I made lunch for him, and Brocken stopped by.

"You never made lunch for me," he complained.

"You never wanted me to be in the kitchen," I joked. "He does."

I could see that Brocken was miffed, and Bengt, who was only on a lunch break, left.

"Something is awfully wrong, isn't it?"

He handed me a letter from the shipyard. They regretted that they could do nothing with "Falken," because the copper lining around the ship was full of holes. It would cost too much for them to repair; it wouldn't pay. But if we could repair it ourselves, they would still let us have the space we now occupied. If we weren't going to do anything with the ship, they asked to have it removed to somewhere else.

Letters had already started to come in from several scientists who were interested in the trip. One of them had enclosed a check, for he wanted to be sure to be counted. The check had fortunately been returned immediately, otherwise we would have been in real trouble. We talked about what to do for a while, then Brocken left.

Some time went by. I talked to Brocken every day on the phone, and we discussed what to do with the ship. The situation

was precarious, and we frankly didn't know what the next step would be.

"What about the 10,000 kroner?" I asked.

"If there is a loss, Bengt is not going to pay a penny," he promised. "This is my responsibility. I'll have to pay the bank back. But they won't ask me before the war is over. I'll think of something. Bengt is not going to lose anything on my foolishness."

Suddenly Gunnar stopped coming around, and I wondered what had happened to him. I decided to go see Rose one evening. After all, she had complained often that she never saw me. When she opened the door she whispered:

"Am I glad to see you."

Kalle was home and he was indeed glad to see me. I turned around and there was Gunnar.

"Oh, there you are," I said, "I wondered what happened to you you haven't been around. Are you all right?"

He smiled sheepishly and nodded. Kalle and I hadn't seen each other for a while, and we kidded and cut up and talked nonsense.

"Why are you home?" I asked.

"The army doesn't need me any more. I am a free man."

"And what are you going to do as a free man?"

"I have a job already," he said. "It pays to have friends in the right places."

I looked up and Rose made eyes for me to come with her to the kitchen.

"I'll make some sandwiches. Come with me," she commanded.

In the kitchen I asked what was going on, why Gunnar was there.

"He has been here every day lately. He is in love with me," she bragged.

"Come on, Rose, he is half your age."

"Age has nothing to do with it. He is crazy about me, I tell you. When Kalle is not around, he hugs me and kisses me and won't leave me alone."

"His glands are acting up again. Be careful, he is like an octopus."

"You don't believe me, do you? I am telling you, he is in love with me. You don't want to believe it, because you thought he was in love with you. But he isn't. He thinks you are cold. You have no feelings."

"O.K.," I said. I could see where this conversation was leading and wanted to avoid it.

It was hard for me to believe that a young boy of twenty would be head over heels in love with a woman of forty. Today

that is not an unusual phenomenon, but it was then and there. Rose looked every bit her age, short and almost as wide as she was high. Her face was beautiful, her legs could be compared with Marlene Dietrich's, but I still couldn't see her as the love of the life of a twenty year old boy. Her personality was warm and loving when she wanted it to be, but her biting tongue lost her friends almost as soon as she got them. I was surprised that Gunnar had discussed me with her, and I decided he was no longer a friend of mine.

Soon afterwards I got the first printing of my book and had the privilege of proof-reading it before it was published. It was an exhilarating time for me, and the day the printer's office called and asked me to come in and pick out a cover they would make especially for me, I was walking on clouds.

The day after the book's publication I could hardly wait until I had seen the papers. A critique would be in every newspaper in the city; how would I handle it? A good review I could handle. Brocken had done nothing but praise me. But I couldn't trust his opinion because I knew he was biased. I wondered what it would be like to get a bad review. Was I as strong as I thought I would be?

I had to be. One write-up was very good, one negative, but most of them had more positive than negative comments: I

was inexperienced; the heroine seemed shallow; the characters were real; the story was a true life story; I had good knowledge of human behavior for one that young, and so on. In one chapter the heroine had explicitly talked against hate of any kind, even against the Germans: "If we behave towards them as they have done towards us, we are no better than they are, and we claim to be better. When the war is over, they have to be treated lawfully. That's why we fight this war." That remark became a topic for discussions. Some agreed with me, some wanted revenge.

Rose insisted that I tell her who was in the book. I repeated: "It is a fictional heroine, although the events are real. That's all." I would rather hear what was going on with Gunnar and her. Every time I visited her, Gunnar was there, whether Kalle was home or not, and I hadn't had a chance to see her alone. This time she was by herself, and as soon as I asked about Gunnar her face lit up. She was delighted by what she had to tell me:

"You thought your old aunt couldn't have admirers any more, but I tell you he is crazy about me. He wants me to divorce Kalle and marry him. Here look yourself."

She handed me some pieces of paper, and there it was just as she had told me. I was dumbfounded.

"And you, what are you going to do? Do you lead him on? Are you lovers?"

"Of course we are, and when I tell Kalle about him, he only laughs. He thinks I am kidding. He just makes fun of me. But it is better that way."

"And you, what do you want? Are you going to leave Karl?"

"Of course not, I could never leave him. He is my life, I couldn't live without him."

"How can you do this. You are leading this young boy on, and you don't mean anything with it. It isn't fair."

"You shouldn't talk. Don't tell me you don't have an affair with Bengt. I have seen how you two look at each other. Don't be a hypocrite."

"Wait a minute. I am not saying I am not taken with him, but I certainly don't have an affair with him. Don't you go around saying that."

"You are cold, aren't you, just as Gunnar said."

We were both upset, and I got up to leave. As I was leaving, Gunnar arrived, and I could hardly look at him as I hurried out. How could Rose be that open about her love affair? What would happen if Kalle finally believed her? Did he believe her and pretend not to because it was more comfortable that way? I knew Karl was not in love with Rose; he loved her like he would a mother or a sister. There was no sex between them, Rose had told me before that she had other lovers. With Karl there was never a hint of another woman. Rose meant it when she said she couldn't live without him, that he was the sunshine of her life. I was more confused than ever.

I soon came down from walking on clouds, thanks to "Falken." We had the ship moved to another place in Stockholm's harbor, while we made up our minds what to do with it. But it cost too much to have it in the harbor, and somehow we had to find another space fast. Brocken and I were both depressed that our plans couldn't be materialized, and the debt hung heavily on our minds. Even if I was not legally responsible for the debt, I felt responsible. Bengt didn't worry too much about it. He was sure that one way or another it would be taken care of.

Then came a letter from the City of Stockholm. "Would Mr. Brock-Utne please remove "Falken" from Stockholm's port as soon as possible as it was being used to harbor non-desirable people for lewd acts." First we were stunned, then we laughed until we cried, and after that we worried.

"Let's try to sell it," Brocken suggested.

"Who will buy a rotten ship with the outside torn down and the inside full of holes, which has been used as a house of ill repute?" I asked. "Be serious."

"Someone will buy it, someone who can build it up, you just wait and see, it was an excellent idea," Brocken stubbornly repudiated.

After a few days of research we found a place a few miles north of Stockholm where we could rent space for very little money. We paid a towing company to have the ship removed and paid rent for several months so that we didn't need to think

of it for a while. Ture had disappeared with his family, and we were glad we didn't have to see him. Brocken was ready to be tied every time Ture's name was mentioned. He was extremely angry at himself for having put all his trust in a con man. Being a bit of a con man himself, he should have known the signs.

In spite of the many favorite reviews of my book, it didn't sell as well as we had hoped. New books sold best in the fall when all the new books were announced, and the contents of my story was not favorite material. I constantly had to tell my family and friends that the book was fiction, that none of them was portrayed, but they didn't believe me. For a while I tried to make a living by writing fiction short stories. Some of them I didn't want to publish in my own name and used Berit Brandt instead. But I was neither skilled nor learned enough to be a free lance writer, and I started back to work at the Norwegian Legation.

Gunnar had become a fixture in Rose & Karl's household, I never saw them alone any more, and little by little I stopped going there. I didn't see much of my brother or his family either. Brocken was there to see me home every day after work, and our three-way conversations with Bengt in the evenings continued as they had before. The war was going in the right direction for the Allies, and we could look forward to peace in the near future.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

It took a while after I sent Kris the book until I heard from him. I was anxiously awaiting his letter but was disappointed when it finally came. He was furious because I used my maiden name. He couldn't understand why I had not used my married name - was I ashamed of it? I was totally taken by surprise. It had never occurred to me to use HIS name, when I had a perfectly good name myself, and I especially couldn't understand why he wanted me to use his name in an undertaking that was entirely my own. He said nothing about the book except criticizing a stupid remark uttered by one of the characters. He thought it didn't make any sense. Nothing else about my work or my effort was mentioned. I couldn't believe it!

If a simple ceremony meant that I would change from being an independent person to an appendix to a man, marriage was not for me. Giving up my name was giving up part of myself, I felt. Few men in those days neither understood what it meant for a woman to have her own identity, nor did they care much about it. I had taken as a matter of course that I would keep my own name. It was never discussed, because I knew how Kris felt about Helmer in a "Doll's House." What we finally agreed upon was to use both names hyphenated. That changed again when we were going to America. Going to a new country was hard enough

without complicating the matter by adding strange double names, so I used my own name in the middle. Times have changed now and women have more choices.

But then, as far as I was concerned, this was the end of my marriage. I would wait until the war was over and when I saw him face to face I would tell him. I showed Brocken the letter. He grunted and tried to defend Kris:

"Don't judge him too harshly, few men can stand to have independent wives. He was just upset because you used your maiden name."

"It's absurd," I fumed. "Just because a woman marries, she loses identity? I am writing a book about what happened to me, Elsa Dickman, not about what happened to Elsa Gippø. I am not giving up my name. Under no circumstances do I give up my own name."

Brocken's constant defense made me calm down, but not give in. It made me reflect a little more about what marriage meant. I hadn't given it much thought earlier. But it made my decision to be independent more forceful. It has made me follow the women's movement with interest and enthusiasm. Whenever I see a woman reach a pinnacle, I am proud.

I do think my husband should have given me credit for having written and produced a book, however.

Now we are in the Spring of 1945. The Allies are in Germany and what they find in the concentration camps are atrocities they never knew existed. The findings have been well documented, and I refrain to comment since it is hard to write about. One evening Rolle and I went to a movie together, and the preview had news from the war, showing pictures from the camps. Rolle got up and left. I had to see it - my mind told me: don't listen - don't look, but in my heart I knew I had to know.

One early morning Aunt Rose called and said quietly:

"Have you seen the paper yet?"

"No, I haven't."

"Wait until Brocken comes, I'll be over as soon as I can. Don't look at it, promise me."

"The phone rang again, it was Brocken."

"Have you read the paper?"

"No, what is in the paper today?"

"Don't read it, I'll be right over."

As soon as he hung up, I ran to the door and took in the paper. In large black letters on the front page I read:

ONLY FIVE SURVIVORS FROM THE NORWEGIAN JEWS DEPORTED TO GERMANY. They had the names of the survivors, but none of the names I was looking for were there. I recognized one name, I knew him well, we had grown up together.

I had been asking myself: Am I ever going to see them again, and answered: Of course I will, I will, I will; and hope had never vanished from my heart: They will be back, they will be home, how can it be otherwise? Just wait until the war is over, they'll be home! AND NOW THIS! The headlines never left my eyes, but I wouldn't let them into my mind: It can't be, it is a mistake, it is nothing but a bad dream, I will wake up soon, it is only a nightmare! But the words were staring right at me - my heart was going thumb, thumb, thumb, thumb. Waves of cold chills *RUSHED* through my body, over and over again. I sank into a chair: I will never see them again, their beautiful, loving faces, never hear their kind familiar voices. Oh God, how could you? How could you, how could you.

Glimpses of days gone by swirled before my eyes, holiday dinners where the family would sit down together around the beautifully set table, the boys and Papa with their skull caps reading from the Torah, Papa rocking back and forth while he prayed, looking up with a stern face but eyes full of love when I would be restless on my chair, impatient for dinner to start. That warm, safe place of home had been no more than an illusion. I had lived inside a balloon, and then the balloon burst.

Brocken came - he didn't say anything, just sat down. Rose came. She was crying. The tears never stopped running. She hugged me, kissed me, hugged me again and again, and stroked my

hand, saying over and over: "What are we to do, what are we to do." Brocken made some coffee and we drank it in silence. Bengt came later. Rolle did not live in Stockholm at that time, and I was relieved that I didn't have to face him right away.

I couldn't then and I can't now understand the hate which make people behave in such an inhuman way. It makes no sense because there is nothing to be gained but destruction and despair. As other people dreamed of a better world in their next lives, I dreamed of a society without discrimination, without hatred, freedom for everybody. I thought I would find it in America. How naive I was!

When the first shock had passed, I began to reflect. I thought back to the weeks before the arrests, trying to understand what had made us stay in Norway instead of escaping to Sweden with Rose and Kalle. Why had we called them hysterical when they left? Why had we told ourselves: *It can't happen here, it can't happen to me*. Now it seemed strange that we could have been so incredibly naive. My father had seen pogroms in Russia - he knew only too well what had happened there. Did he finally feel safe in Norway because he was free to do what he liked? Or could he simply not face another pogrom in the making? And the rest of us - we had all read "Mein Kampf" - we knew what Hitler intended to do, we had heard and read his speeches - how could we have been so dense? Whenever I thought

of escaping to Sweden, the thought had not gone any further. How was it possible just to pack a little suitcase and leave your home for good, leave your friends, your clothes, your pictures, your BOOKS?

And then the unthinkable did happen: I packed a little suitcase and left my home for good. By then it was too late for the others. We had thought that either all of us would go, or none. We knew Rolle had to stay because of Nusse. The irony of it all is almost too cruel to write about, although I must. It hadn't mattered who had left. All was by chance. Rolle had been spared from deportation to Germany because he was married to Nusse who was not Jewish. But my brother Sigurd - I can barely stand to think about it - he had also been married to a non-Jew, but she was keeping company with a German soldier, the enemy - a total betrayal. He didn't know she had gotten a divorce while he was in the camp. He thought he was still married to her. But he didn't want to be associated with her, and when the prisoners were asked to step into two groups - those who were married to non-Jews, those who were not, he stepped into the group who were not. Had he stepped into the other group, he would have been saved. All this because nobody knew what was going on - it was like a lottery - a LOTTERY about who lived and who died.

When the peace finally came, on the 7th of May 1945, people in Stockholm were ecstatic. They could be because they had lost nothing. The streets were full of jubilant people, hugging and kissing, singing and dancing. I walked between Brocken and Bengt, street up and street down, holding a lonely red rose, a gift from Bengt. None of us took part in the festivities. We were, of course, happy that the war had finally ended, but the wounds were too fresh for me to feel jubilant about anything.

BOOK THREE

Letters to Jesse

CHAPTER ONE

November 9, 1990

Dear Jesse:

The weather is gorgeous here, I sat outside reading yesterday for a long time. When the weather is good, Grandpa and I go for walks in Laumeier Park.

I am planning my trip to London in February. As you know the St. Louis Symphony is playing there and my brother, Rolle, will come from Norway to hear them and meet me. It also gives your father and Rolle a chance to see each other again and renew their family ties. In the meantime we will miss you on Thanksgiving as we will on your birthday. I hope you have a decent time.

Did I ever tell you about my brother Sigurd who was born on November 9? Today is a day to remember, because the hostages are back from Iran and my brother would have been, *should* have been 75 years old. So that he will not be forgotten, this letter will be about him. He never had a chance to beget children himself, so you will have to stand in as a substitute.

We called him Sapse (pronounced Saapsa). He was only three years older than I and was the brother I knew best, because we

grew up together and played together when he didn't have other boys to play with. When our parents had company, we had to put on our good clothes and be on our best behavior before we were brought in to greet the guests. Then we were dismissed to another room to entertain ourselves the best we could without making noise. So we invented pillow fights. If we wanted to giggle, we did it into the pillows. We had a lot of fun, even if we didn't dare to make noise. Today it's the other way around, the parents obey their children instead.

Sapse was a charismatic, beautiful child who later became a handsome man. He started dating after his Bar Mitzvah at thirteen when he, after Jewish law, became a man. The girls were wild about him. He charmed and tap-danced his way around them. I will never understand why the neighbors below permitted that constant noise, but they never complained. Sapse tapped from the minute he got up until he went to bed. When he wasn't in school or working, he was out dating. His dancing was very good, but not good enough for the stage. We had all seen the Fred Astaire pictures and knew an artist when we saw one. Still Sapse had a lot of fun with his dancing, and we liked to watch him. Sometimes it became too noisy for Mother, and she asked him to stop. When she did, he found mischievous things to do to her and teased her a lot.

Mother enjoyed Sapse very much, because he was happy and full of fun. Sometimes he made her laugh until she cried. I can still remember the day he tied her apron to her chair, and when she got up, the chair came with her. She laughed so hard we were afraid she was going to have a heart attack. She had to lie down on the sofa to get her strength back. I also remember the day I came into the kitchen and found my mother frantic. It was on a holiday, and she and our housekeeper, Asta, were both working hard to get everything ready before we went to the synagogue in the evening. I asked Mama what was wrong and she answered:

"You brother hid the dinner roast for me."

"How did he do that?"

"I came to baste the roast in the oven, and it wasn't there. I knew he had taken it, but when I went looking for him, he had left. I had to look for it everywhere before I finally found it stuck far back in the cupboard. I could strangle him. Now we'll be late."

"You mean he actually took the roast out of the oven and hid it?"

"He took the roast out of the oven and hid it. I can't believe he did that. Your brother is crazy!"

I was astonished over such a prank, but suddenly saw the humor in it and started to laugh. My mother and Asta joined in, and for a while we almost became hysterical and couldn't get a thing done. After that, whenever we mentioned the roast, we

broke out in laughter, and Sigurd was never punished for his prank. We laughed a lot in my home.

When Sigurd was nineteen and I sixteen, my parent's clothing business had a bad year, and we had no money to rent a house in the country for the summer as we had always done as far back as I could remember. I missed the country. The town was dead, all my friends were gone for the Summer and I was lonely. I spent my days at the public beach by myself, swimming and sun-bathing. It was a hot summer, and I felt sorry for my mother who was more or less stuck in the steaming flat. She was a big woman and suffered in the heat. Her friends had all gone to the country too, so there wasn't much for her to do either.

She decided that I had to get out of the city even if it was only for a short time, and she arranged for Sigurd to chaperone me to the country for a week. She rented a room for us, made arrangements with the farmer that we take our meals with his family, gave Sigurd some money for extras, and sent us on our way. The room had a wash-basin but no cooking facilities. But we didn't want to eat with the farmer's family. We wanted independence and told the farmer's wife that we would take care of ourselves. We had never done that before. Asta had always been there to feed us, put out our clothes and pick up the discarded ones from the floor. It was a wonder we knew how to tie our own shoes.

The first thing my chaperone told me was that we were to go our separate ways. We bought bread and butter and cheese to have in our room. Milk we got every day from the farmer. That, and the green apples we went hunting for in the orchards around, were the only things we ate that whole week. I didn't mind. I thought it was exhilarating to be totally free to do what I pleased for a whole week. I had always envied the boys because they could do so many things that were denied to me, because as the youngest child and only girl in the family, I was held to more rigid standards.

There had been a younger girl in the family, but she had died at age three when I was only five. I don't remember her much, except that she was blond and blue-eyed and beautiful. She died of blood-poisoning, easily treated today but not in the early nineteen-twenties. Mother never talked about her, but my sister was ever-present. I could never be late, or do anything dangerous like skiing or bicycling. Every minute Mother had to know what I was doing. That my mother let me go away for a week with my youngest brother to look after me was a complete surprise and an unexpected treat.

We slept most of the mornings, and in the afternoons we went swimming. Most of the nights we stayed out. It never gets dark during the summer nights in the northern countries, and every night there was a dance on the pier. Someone played the

harmonica or accordion, and on the weekends there was a band. I am sure I mostly sat around and looked at the other people dance. Once in a while Sigurd would dance with me, but otherwise I didn't dance much. I was too particular - if the boy wasn't tall enough, or handsome or dashing, I would decline. The result was that after a while nobody asked me.

Saturday night came, and the band was there and a lot of people dressed in their best clothes ready to have a good time. I sat at my regular place when a young, handsome man came up and asked me to dance. I looked him over, liked what I saw and accepted. We danced for a while - I loved to dance, and I was good, my brothers had taught me well. When we stopped dancing, the young man asked if I wanted to go for a walk. I said O.K. and hand in hand we started to walk. I wanted to go to the beach and look at the water, but he steered me into the woods. I protested because there was nothing to look at in the woods, and I hadn't the slightest idea why he wanted to go there. He found a place to sit down and motioned for me to sit beside him. I still protested but sat down. His hand began creeping up my leg, and I pushed it away. He tried again and again, and every time I pushed his hand away and scooted a little farther away from him. He touched my breast and I slapped his hand. He looked at me strangely and said:

"How old are you?"

"Sixteen, why do you ask?"

"Have you ever been with a man before?"

I looked at him without understanding what he meant, and he said:

"I guess not. Let's go."

He took me back to my place on the pier and said goodbye. I was disappointed that he didn't want to dance any more and hoped he would come back and ask me later. He didn't, of course, and I was wondering what had gone wrong. That's how ignorant I was, Jess. Nobody had explained to me about sex. We learned about the rest of the body, but not about the sex parts. I don't know if that was a universal way of teaching, or it was only our teacher who didn't want to touch the subject, but that's how it was for me. Where my mother expected me to get sex education, I don't know, probably from my future husband as she most certainly had. I hadn't yet started to wonder where babies came from. There were so many other things to learn and so many books to read, I wasn't interested yet.

When I was twelve, I was often invited to parties with teenagers a couple of years older than I, and they played "spin the bottle" or other games that involved kissing. I didn't like it, and never let a boy come near me. I quit going to those parties because they bored me. If I had kept going, maybe the other girls would have explained a thing or two, but that didn't happen. I told my brother what had happened with that young man, and he told me never to go into the woods with anybody again, but

he didn't explain why. That incident spurred my curiosity, however, because that was the last time I didn't know what was going on.

Back home from the vacation, my mother almost cried when she saw me - I had lost so much weight. I was delighted, I had always thought I was too tall and too heavy. Now at least I was only too tall. That was the first time I realized that if I ate less, I would lose weight. I knew that my mother had been on a diet several times, but I thought that meant only that she was allowed to eat two eggs instead of the one we got. Oh, Jesse, don't you ever wonder how we grow up?

Every time I think about my childhood and that young man, I smile. As I mentioned before, our parents always rented a house in the country every summer. As soon as school was out, we packed a rented truck with all our dishes and some furniture for our two month stay in the country. Usually we rented a farmer's house, while he and his family lived in rooms in the barns or in a summerhouse. Those summers are the happiest memories of my life. Sapse was always up to his old tricks. When Mother and Asta baked cookies, and a sheet of cookies was waiting to be baked, he would hide below the window and sneak unbaked cookies. Then he would disappear. Mother was upset because she knew she had filled the sheet so that it would be ready for the oven. Remember we had a wood-burning oven, and it was important that

the heat be regulated for the cookies to be evenly baked. It took many stolen cookies before Mother caught on, and even then she had to laugh. It was impossible to get mad at Sigurd, and besides the culprit was never to be found.

Another time, our oldest brother, Herman, wanted Sigurd to run an errand to the little nearby town and pick up some special candies for him. Good natured Sapse didn't mind the few miles back and forth to do his older brother a favor. We were all eagerly waiting for him to come back because we knew we would get a taste too. After a long wait we saw him finally coming around the corner happily skipping and whistling his way back while we were screaming: "Hurry up, won't you, hurry." When he came up to us Herman grabbed the paper sack and was ready to pick up a piece of chocolate. Then he screamed:

"Where is my candy. Did you put it in your pockets, you fool. Give it here."

"It's in the bag, isn't it?"

"The bag is empty, you idiot. What did you do with it?"

"I guess I took something for my trouble," he answered and then I saw him running as fast as he could with Herman right on his heels trying to catch him. I don't think he ever did. None of us ever forgot that story.

Sapse had many lovers before he fell in love and married. His wife was a beautiful woman, and he was content to stay home

with her and settle down. She, on the other hand, thought she had married a party guy and didn't want to sit home. She became bored and looked other places for more excitement. Unfortunately for him she took up with a Nazi and got a divorce while Sigurd was at Berg Concentration Camp. She is not one of my happy memories.

So Jesse, from now on, remember November 9 and Sapse. He is worth remembering.

Love Grandma

CHAPTER TWO

January 15, 1991

Dear Jesse,

We are under a bit of strain here today waiting to hear if there is going to be a war with Iraq. Instead of dwelling on whether or not you will be involved in a war, I will tell you about the ninth of April, 1940, when the Germans invaded Norway, and the war came to us.

Norway was a peaceful country. The last war had been with Sweden in 1808. But you can read about that yourself in the history books. I am only mentioning it to make you understand how completely unprepared we were for what happened on the ninth of April. Rolle, Sigurd and I were home, Papa was out playing poker with his friends, and Herman was somewhere else. We were sound asleep when all of a sudden the air alarm sounded and woke us up. In a second we were up and ran to the windows to see what was happening. We leaned out and could hear the sound of airplanes and shooting. The planes seemed to be everywhere, but we couldn't see anything from our location. We desperately wanted to know what was going on and turned on the radio, although we knew it didn't operate during the night. It was dead. We learned later that we should have taken cover when the sirens went off, instead of turning on all the lights and leaning out

the windows.

Papa came home, but he was no wiser than we were. I can't remember if Herman came in, but I think he did. After some time the alarm stopped, and we all went to bed and tried to get some sleep. We left the radio on so that we would hear the news in the morning. When the news finally came it was bad: Germany had invaded Norway and was about to occupy all the official buildings. We looked at each other but didn't say much. We had our own private thoughts. We knew about Hitler's hatred of the Jews and what he had done in Germany, but this was Norway - it couldn't happen here, could it? Jesse, we were like ostriches, burying our heads in the sand.

Suddenly Sigurd said: "I'm going out, I can't sit here."

"I am going with you," I said as I jumped up to put on my coat.

We walked down the street together. Not many people were about, mainly the men belonging to the home front. We had walked about twenty minutes when the alarm went on again, and airplanes roared overhead. We stopped in the middle of the street and looked up, wondering if the airplanes were ours or if they were German or English. Someone from the home front came running, he was screaming to us to take cover, and before we knew what was happening we were pushed into a building. We stayed there until the clear signal came. Then Sigurd took off on his

own, and I can't remember what I did. I didn't go to work and I didn't go home. I do remember that I was glued to a radio somewhere.

The day itself seemed unreal. Seemingly by the stroke of a wand, everything changed. You turned around and your country no longer belonged to you. In Oslo the Germans had taken over the official buildings, the communications, the police. The radio was full of propaganda proclamations, and Quisling, the biggest traitor in history, told the Norwegians to give up peacefully and stop the fighting in North Norway. Fortunately the King with his family and the whole Norwegian Government had fled North. There was a meeting in a little town, I have forgotten the name, where the King offered to abdicate if the Government didn't want to go with him to England. The vote was unanimous, the Government would stay with the King and try to get to England. They all fled North to Narvik where a British ship was waiting to take them to England and where they arrived safely.

At home that evening Sigurd told us that he had been trying to join the forces up North with some other young men, but by the time they were on their way, the road had been blocked and they couldn't get through. In my heart I was relieved that he was home safely, but I would have been very proud if he had managed to join the resistance fighters.

The next day I decided to go back to work, dressed as usual in heels and silk stockings. I took the streetcar across town and walked about ten minutes before I reached my destination. It was just like any other day, except for a few German soldiers making a soon-to-be-familiar loud noise when the heels of their boots hit the pavement. I worked as an accountant in a large electrical company, and at work we talked for a while about what had happened the night before, but soon continued working as if nothing had happened.

Then the siren started again. Nobody knew what to do. Rumors were flying: the English were coming to bomb the harbor and the German Headquarters, and we'd better be getting out of the city. All my colleagues started to run from their jobs, and I thought I'd better be going too. I found myself walking slowly out of town while people around me were in panic and running as fast as they could. I stopped at a bakery and bought a loaf of bread; the woman who waited on me was ready to close up and get out of town too. She hadn't heard any rumors, but when she saw all the people running, she thought she was better off joining them. I told her what I knew, and she closed up in a hurry and started to run too. With the bread under my arm I continued walking. The street cars were full, people were hanging outside and barely holding on, and both the coming and going cars were moving in one direction, out of town. All kinds of vehicles were full of people escaping in the same direction. To see a whole

city evacuating in panic was a strange sight to behold. One garbage wagon came trotting along, and on top of the garbage sat a lady in hat and gloves and high heels, holding on to her hat. One woman was pushing a wheel-barrow with two small children, some clothing and provisions thrown in. She was almost running. Bicycles were scooting in and out among the people and vehicles. I don't know why I was so composed, except that I usually become calm when everybody else gets excited.

A car stopped beside me, and I heard someone call: "Elsa, get in." I gratefully jumped in with some co-workers. By that time my feet were sore, and I had started to feel lonely. We were going to the cabin that our company had provided for its employees. We felt like the cabin belonged to us, for all we had to do was to reserve it for a special time, and it was ours. It was a great cabin, sitting on a cliff overlooking the city and the whole valley, equipped with four bedrooms, each with four bunk beds, a huge living room with a king-sized fireplace, and a large kitchen. I loved it and had frequently taken the opportunity to use it for parties and skiing.

As the first ones in the cabin, we lit the fireplace and put on the coffee. We knew we would have an onslaught later. In good spirit we joked and laughed at our adventure. Nobody knew why we were there, and since we didn't hear any airplanes, we knew the rumors were false. We didn't believe anything would

happen and decided to have a good time. Today I can't remember the names of the people who picked me up, but they must have been high up in the company since they had a car. Few private people had cars in those days.

Soon the cabin began to fill up. It was more than full, but people kept coming. We watched the skies for airplanes, but there were none. We heard nothing either, for the radio was dead. My loaf of bread was duly appreciated by the children. We talked and speculated until bedtime. The beds were given to the children and the older people. The rest of us bedded down on the floor, side by side, like sardines. It was an uncomfortable night. Most of the people slept, but I couldn't. I thought the night would never end. I was glad when morning came and I could go out in the kitchen and make some coffee. I looked a fright. My silk stocking were tattered, my shoes muddy, my clothes wrinkled and my hair unkempt. It was the last time during my war years in Norway that I dressed so frivolously.

Since nothing had happened during the night, and we had no food or adequate clothing, we all decided to go back to the city. Nobody had an answer to why this had happened, but the rumors were close to the truth, although they were not verified before the war was over. I'll tell you about it in a minute.

Back home I found Papa and Sigurd. They had been at Rolle's when the alarm went and the panic started. Rolle hurried home to Nusse, and Papa and Sigurd walked leisurely to the end of the city. Papa got tired, and they found a bench to sit on. Then they decided they would be just as well off at home, and they started back to town.

They knew as little as I did about why the alarm went off. But they were happy to see me. They had worried when I didn't come home that night. Rose and Kalle had gone to a place far outside Oslo, and they couldn't come back for fourteen days. They had ended up where the Freedom Fighters were still battling the Germans. Life is so ironic. Here they were, leaving the city so that they could be safe, and they ended up in the most perilous place they could possibly have found.

The rumors were tireless. We heard many different stories about the panic and why it had happened. But it was not until the war was over that we heard the whole story. I will give you the highlights as I remember them. Before you can really understand what happened, take a look at the map of Norway and Oslo. At the most narrow part of Oslofjord there is an ancient fortress. That fortress had two cannons which hadn't been used since World War I. The Germans had sent several of their ships to Norway and they were all coming up Oslofjord. One of the ships harbored the administration that was to take over Norway's

affairs. The Navy, who manned the fortress, saw these German ships coming and shot off the cannon. When the "Old Berta," as we called the cannon, actually fired, nobody was more surprised than the man who fired it. The shot hit the big administration ship, Bluecher. The marine loaded the cannon again and kept on shooting until there was no ammunition left. By then the two largest ships had been so badly damaged that they sank. "Old Berta" had done her duty. What was going to be a triumphal entrance for the Germans became a chaos of horrors instead.

Of course the Master Reich could not admit any kind of defeat, and to get the people out of Oslo, they started the rumors about the English coming to bomb Oslo harbor. They didn't want the Norwegian people to see the wreckage and the dead Germans floating in the waters.

The fighting in Norway lasted over two months, and every day we heard through the grapewine what was going on. But there were no way the few resistance workers could stop the Germans, although they did a lot of damage to them. Norway was taken by surprise and had no time to call in the regular army. The resisters escaped to Sweden and were later flown to England. Some of them came back and became our underground fighters, the same people who helped me escape.

IT IS 5:15 PM WEDNESDAY JANUARY 16, 1991. IT HAS JUST BEEN
REPORTED THAT THE WAR HAS STARTED. WE ARE KEEPING GOOD THOUGHTS.

We love you deeply and are thinking of you constantly. I
must go and listen to the news.

SAVE THIS LETTER. IT IS MY HISTORY AND YOURS. YOUR CHILDREN
AND GRANDCHILDREN WILL BE INTERESTED.

Love Grandma

CHAPTER THREE

January 21, 1991

Jesse, my boy,

By now you must have stories to tell that exceed mine. We have watched the war continuously on CNN from the day it started, but to be out there in the middle is hard for me to imagine even though I have been close to war before. I am so sorry that you have to experience war. Know in your heart that we are thinking good thoughts and that we are proud of you.

You asked me to compare the feelings I had for my brothers with the feelings I have for you. I believe the difference amounts to feeling proud instead of helpless. Israel came into existence partly because the Jews no longer wanted to feel helpless. They wanted their own country so that they could fight back when they were attacked. Most Jews did not fight back when the Germans started the war against them, but the Holocaust made them change their minds. They pledged that this will never happen again. We were brought up not to fight. If you fight, all eyes will be upon you, and the Jews would rather not be noticed. We were raised to live our own way in peace and obscurity. My brothers were trapped because they were raised to do as they were told. If they had been raised to be bolder, they might not have gone to their graves without fight. I felt sorry

for them because they were trapped. I am proud of you, for you are fighting for the freedom that was denied them. My brothers were the victims, you are the hero. If anything should happen to you, and I'm confident it won't, the pain would be the same, but it would help to know that the loss came from the pursuit of a principle, not merely from a tyrant's evilness.

There is no difference in the love I felt for my brothers and the love I feel for you. My expectations wouldn't have been the same since you are a direct descendent, and I hope to live on and be remembered by your children. There is, however, a distinction in the anxieties I felt then and now. I knew my family was in a precarious situation, and that they were suffering. You are not suffering in the same way. You are out there fighting so that we on the home front will never go through what my family did. They would have been proud of you because you give them back the dignity that was so brutally denied them.

The war years in Norway were difficult, more for some people than for others. Our family always managed to have food. My father had, when he first came to Norway, walked from farm to farm selling clothing and notions, and the farmers all became his friends. During the war he traded his wares for eggs, milk and butter, foods that didn't exist for anyone in the city but the Germans and the Quislings. My father was a goodhearted man. Whenever he came home with these treasured foods, he would give

away eggs to sick people and milk to children who needed it. It is hard for me to understand why such a man should have to suffer as he did.

Early in the war the radios were confiscated from Jews, and a J was stamped on our identification cards. Those were the only systematic infringements on the rights of the Jews in the southern part of the country until the Fall of 1942. In the Northern city of Trondheim, it was much more difficult for the Jews, although I didn't know much about that before the war ended. We heard about individual incidents through the grapevine, and this led to uneasiness among the Jews, but I was young and optimistic, and in the back of my mind "It can't happen to us" prevailed.

In spite of the hardships - bread that tasted like sawdust, no butter, little fresh milk and fish, and no meat, coffee, or tea - the optimism was profound and the spirit high. Among friends we made fun of the Germans, and laughed ourselves silly for every new joke we heard about them. We found ways to irritate both the Germans and the Quislings. We hated the Quislings the most, for they were the ones who collaborated with the Germans, they were the traitors. We called ourselves Jøssinger. On King Haakon VII's birthday we teased our so-called authorities by wearing a flower in the lapel of our clothes. This action angered the masters enough to forbid us to wear

flowers. Some defied the orders, and they were arrested and taken in the police-wagon to the police station. There they were made to stay for hours with their faces against the wall, and before they were released they were made to eat the flower they had been wearing. There is a Norwegian book which gives an account of all the humor during the war. Whenever I need a good laugh, I take it up and read something to your grandfather.

To buy on the black market became a game. Food that came on the black market was stolen from the Germans, and we felt good every time we got hold of something. One time Rolle got a side of beef. We were all delighted. I had a big piece of meat to take home, and since it was heavy to carry, I took the streetcar instead of walking as I usually did. When I got up to leave I saw blood on the floor, and when I lifted the package the blood was dripping from it. I was terrified and got off the streetcar in a hurry, looking around to see if anybody had noticed. Fortunately the streetcar stopped right outside our flat, and I hurried upstairs with my forbidden goods. Had I been discovered and arrested, I would have been tortured until I had told them from where it came, and then shot. And then my brother would have been shot. It was a terrifying moment, but made a good story to tell when I was in the clear.

Jesse, you were remembered at North Middle School today. About 23 people from Kirkwood are in the Persian Gulf, but your name was the only one mentioned at your school. I'll write soon.

Love Grandma

CHAPTER FOUR

January 31, 1991

Jesse,

Since I wrote you last time, changes have taken place. When you talked to your father he must have told you that the Symphony postponed their European trip. With flights being cancelled left and right, it wasn't feasible for them to go, because of their tight schedule. My brother cancelled his trip too. He didn't have a heart to go since Israel was attacked, and with the Symphony not being there and my brother not coming, I abolished my plans too.

Yvonne is back again from Israel. She is sorry she caused you adversity by writing you a letter from Israel. She had no idea that the Saudis didn't allow letters from Israel into their country. When your mother called and told me about it, she was very upset and said the letters just kept coming and coming. She wanted me to call Norway and put a stop to it. I didn't want to hurt my family in that way, and as I understood, Yvonne only sent you one letter. All you had to do was to write her a letter through me and explain why you couldn't receive letters from Israel. Telling me that letters kept coming and coming, when there was only one letter, made me quite upset. The situation is bad enough without bringing in exaggerations to make it worse.

The weather has been cold and icy and Grandpa had to cancel his concert at the last minute. I felt sorry for him. He and his students had all worked so hard and were very disappointed. But it will go on next Tuesday, and I am sure it will go well as usual.

We watch CNN all day, and when I hear about a serviceman being killed or wounded, I have this constant lump in my stomach. I cry. The tears that should have been coming fifty years ago, are coming now. I am thinking of the mothers and fathers, siblings and grandparents of that serviceman, and I experience grief and anguish with them.

But even wars have comic and light sides. I especially remember our Independence Day, the 17th of May, 1942. From the time I was a little girl, that day was the most important day of the year. When you go to Norway try to make it during that time, because you will never see anything more festive. You can feel excitement in the air as soon as you step outside. It doesn't matter if it rains, you feel that something unusual is going on. If it should happen to be a bright day, which once in a while occurs, the air is electrifying. Flags are everywhere. Children of all ages, in their Sunday best and carrying small flags, are on their way to the schoolgrounds where they assemble as part of the big parade. Many dress in beautifully embroidered national costumes, and since every valley in Norway has its own design,

the picture you see is vivid. Many of the adults also wear costumes, the women in full embroidered skirts and tops decorated with exquisite silver jewelry, the men in black wool knickers, belts with silver buckles, white leggings, white blousy shirts under embroidered vests, all signifying the pattern of the valley from where they come.

Almost every school has its own band, and the drummers try their best to keep the children in step. They all meet at a designated place in the morning, and then start marching up the long, almost straight avenue leading to the Palace. In front of the band strides the flag-bearer, and when the band comes to the Palace and see their King, they stop and lower the flag in greeting. On the balcony the King in top hat surrounded by his family stands straight and greets the children by tipping his hat and waving his arm. Every child without exception carries a little flag, and when you stand in front of the Palace and look down the street, you see an ocean of red, blue and white flags wave after wave, as far as your eyes can reach. Last time your Grandpa and I were home on the 17th of May the parade lasted over three hours, and all the time the King, Olav V, who was then over 80 years old, never wavered. He is dead now, and his son Harald V succeeded him.

After the Germans invaded Norway there were no celebrations of the Independence Day since we were no longer free. The former

glittering day was signified with a black armband instead. The first two years the whole city was in mourning. In 1942 a new proclamation prohibited any kind of demonstration, including black armbands. We had to do something to keep our spirit up, and Rose and I decided we wanted to have a party. It became a big undertaking. Since we were not allowed to celebrate, we had no place big enough to house all our friends, and we lacked food and liquor. But that didn't stop us. We wanted a party.

The only one we knew who had a place big enough to accommodate everybody we wanted to include was Kalle's friend, Birger. He was a bachelor and had inherited his parent's place. Neither Rose nor I liked him very much because he was a little pipsqueak afraid of his own shadow. We hadn't planned on inviting him in the first place, but he was Kalle's friend and Kalle insisted that we not only invite him but also talk him into letting us use his place. Rose and I were ready to give up the whole idea, but thought better of it.

We invited our friends and relatives and told them to bring their own liquor. Then the hunt started for food. We bought meat on the black market, Papa got eggs, milk and butter from the peasants, and a whole liter of whipping cream appeared. We cooked and created new menus to fit our supplies, and it all had to be done in secret and the food hidden away. But it was great fun.

Every adult citizen was entitled to one bottle of liquor a month. We had a coupon entitling us to buy a bottle at the Government regulated liquor store. I don't drink and had always given away my coupon to my father who liked a shot before dinner, but this time I planned to buy a good bottle of aquavit for the party. The quantity was limited and the demands great so to get anything at all you had to stay in line. The lines were always long, and as the war went on, they became longer and longer. To get a bottle of decent liquor you had to stand in line the evening before, and for that party I was in the line for twelve hours. That's how much the party meant to me.

The 16th of May we assembled all the food at Aunt Rose's since she lived closest to Birger. I had numerous packages to take over to her, plus the bottle, and I decided to walk to her place instead of taking the bus. I didn't want to be noticed with all my goods. It usually took me about thirty minutes to walk from my place to hers, but this time it took much longer because I had to shift the heavy packages around. When I finally got there I managed to get inside the building without any mishap, and started up the stairway to her apartment. She lived on the fourth floor, no elevator. Halfway up the stairs I had to shift the packages again and this time the bottle fell to the stone floor and broke. Rose came running down and I stood there as if paralyzed and stared at the broken bottle. Rose took some packages away from me and started up the stairs. I finally

managed to go after her while tears fell from my eyes like hot cascades. That is the first and last time I have cried over a bottle of liquor. The hallway smelled like an unaired bar for days afterwards.

Birger came over and almost out of breath told us about his street being full of Quislings to watch over another Quisling who lived in his building. If he had known that one of his neighbors was a Quisling, he would never have agreed to have the party.

"It's too late to change your mind now, Birger, so just take it easy. Nothing is going to happen." Rose spoke with unusual calm which surprised me.

We decided to try to get a taxi to take the food over to Birger's, but he refused to let us do it. He took a couple of packages himself and said he'd be back to get the rest.

When Birger finally made it back, he was shaken with fear. He had been stopped by one of the Quislings who wanted to know what was in the packages. Fortunately someone had called the inquisitor away, and Birger had run for his life. After dark we all sneaked into his house with the food. The party was to start at 1:00 pm the next day. We decided to meet at Rose's and walk two at a time to Birger's.

Seventeenth of May! When we met at Rose's the next day she said there would be no party. Birger had been stopped again when he went home the night before and been told not to show his face again. He had carried all the food down to the cellar and drunk the bottle of whipping cream which had made him sick all night.

"Serves him right," I said angrily. "He could have put the whipping cream in the cellar too, that idiot. He didn't have to drink it."

The party was postponed two days, because Birger didn't allow us to come before. We were bitterly disappointed, but there was nothing we could do when the host was such a chicken. Most of the people who had gathered at Rose's went home. The few who stayed played bridge. There was no food in the house, of course, it was all in Birger's cellar. Rose called him and demanded that he bring the cake. He eventually came with the cake under his arm. You can imagine what the cake looked like after being carried that way. But we ate it anyway, angry as we were. We thought Birger behaved like a coward. I would have kicked him if I hadn't been brought up better.

We finally had the party, and we had a good time, but we all got sick because some of the food had spoiled. A never-to-be-forgotten 17 of May.

As a footnote I have to tell you about Birger. A few days later he was out with a friend at a restaurant. His friend said something to a girl who was kissing a German. A Quisling overheard him and arrested Birger instead of his friend, and he spent two months in jail. Poor Birger was never the same afterwards.

CHAPTER FIVE

February 7, 1991

Dear Jesse

Finally the iceage has disappeared. Since the last part of December the back and front yards have been like sheets of ice. It was almost impossible to go visit the neighbors even, but now it is all gone, and we are relieved we got through it without any broken bones.

I won't write about the war you are in, but let me write you about a scene from my war. You have often heard us talking about Quisling, whose name has contributed to the language as being synonymous with traitor. He was Hitler's number one henchman in Norway.

In February of 1941 I recuperated from a bout with the flu at a resort hotel in the mountains. I went by myself, but it didn't take long before I met some very nice people, and every night I danced nonstop with the activity director, a handsome young man and a terrific dancer. I had a lot of fun.

At every meal I noticed an odd-looking woman sitting by herself in the corner of the dining room, and during the evenings she was still there with a drink in her hand. She sat straight, like she had a ruler up her spine, her dark hair was parted in

the middle and pulled back tightly in a bun, her face was without makeup and extremely pale, and she was dressed completely in black. She was always alone, never talked to anyone, never smiled.

My week in the mountains was almost over when my curiosity got the best of me and I asked at the front desk who she was. The clerk took one long look at me and answered:

"That is Mrs. Quisling."

The answer unnerved me. At dinner that night I asked my dinner companions if it was true that she was Mrs. Quisling, and they confirmed it.

"Why didn't you tell me?" I asked.

"We didn't want to ruin your vacation," was the answer.

They were right, of course. It did ruin the last day of my stay. I didn't feel free any more. I tried to keep out of her sight. I was afraid she would have me thrown out of the hotel or arrested. It is a hideous feeling, knowing that someone wishes you ill.

Thinking about it now, maybe she didn't wish me ill. Maybe she didn't agree with her husband at all, but since she was married to him, there wasn't much she could do about it, not in those days under that rule. Maybe she dressed completely in black because that was the way she felt, in mourning. If she

had wanted me thrown out, she could have done it the first day. She surely had seen me at every meal and every night having fun while she was sitting by herself drinking. Not once did I see anybody talk to her. The waiter was correct, not friendly as he was to me. She surely must have felt the cold shoulder she was receiving. Was she immune to it or did she feel the shame of being married to a traitor? It would have been interesting to know how she felt and what she was thinking. For me it was a strange experience.

But let me get back to our last year in Stockholm. After the war in June 1945, Kris came back from England. I was still working for the Legation and through my work was able to travel back and forth from Sweden to Norway on an expense account. I met Kris in Norway, and when I saw him coming toward me in uniform and beret, he looked so much like a stranger that I was upset. Before we even hugged, I took his beret off to see if it was really him.

At that time I resented uniforms of any kind. They reminded me too much of the Germans tramping through the streets; it took some years before I got over my aversion. I asked him if he wouldn't please put on civilian clothes so that he didn't have to salute his superiors when we walked down the street. He explained that he wanted to get out of the army as soon as possible, and it was better if he complied with all the rules so

that his name didn't appear before the officers who would discharge him. He had been a spokesman for the soldiers and complained every time there was a reason. He had had words with his sergeant more than once and wasn't too popular among the brass. Some of the stories he told from army life didn't enhance my opinion of the military personnel.

We stayed with Kris' father and aunt for a couple of days. They were nice, kind people and tried their best to make us comfortable, but being married was so new to me, and staying with the in-laws in their old-fashioned cold water flat didn't ease the situation. In Stockholm I had lived in more modern surroundings, and it is almost frightening how fast one gets used to the comforts of life. The city of Oslo seemed grey and poor: no wares in the stores, no displays in the windows, no color. After having lived in the glittering Stockholm for almost three years, Oslo was hard to take.

We decided to make our home in Stockholm until we figured out what we would do with our lives. I had a job and an apartment there, and in Norway we had no place to live. To get an apartment in Oslo took several years on the waiting list, and I neither wanted to stay with Kris' family, nor did I want our old place, which also was an old-fashioned cold water flat. I went to the people who occupied the apartment and asked if I could see my old home again. They let me, of course, but were

obviously relieved when I said I wouldn't take the apartment away from them. I had hoped to find some of our old things there, but everything was gone. The apartment had been totally cleaned out before the new people moved in. It was as if our family had never existed. In the attic I found my bicycle, without wheels, and the neighbors upstairs explained that their son had used the wheels since there had been nothing to buy. They wanted to pay for the bicycle, but I told them never mind. I took the boxes Else-Marie and I had put in the attic and stored them at her place.

I was glad to get back to work and left for Stockholm after a couple of days. Kris got out of the army sooner than he expected and joined me there. Brocken had finally sold "Falken" for a measly 250 kroner. Remember he had paid more than 10,000 kroner for it. Kris and I went out to the archipelago to take the ship back to Stockholm, the only trip any of us got out of that ship. I had told him the story about the ship, and he hadn't said much, just listened. On board the boat he took up a pen-knife, stuck it in the floor and said":

"It's rotten."

"That the understatement of the year," I exclaimed. "Of course it's rotten, why do you think we are here?"

We didn't say much after that, but enjoyed the trip in to the city, for Stockholm's archipelago is one of the most

beautiful wonders of the world. The weather cooperated, it was sunny with blue skies, and we never tired of looking at the hundreds of small islands, scattered about like pieces of a large puzzle, some with only one house, others with several tiny summer cottages sprinkled around. It was so quiet and peaceful gliding through the still waters that the shock of getting in to the busy harbor was almost overwhelming. We left Falken at the shipyard where we had started out, the circle completed.

That was the last we saw of "Falken," but not the last we heard. A couple of years after we came to America, Brocken came storming in to us one day exclaiming:

"I have news about Falken." We looked at him to continue.

"The man I sold it to was an engineer, and he built it up himself, and it has been used to transport Nazis from Germany to Argentina."

"Where did you hear that?" I was deeply shocked and disturbed.

"It is true, I heard it from a former colleague who wanted to go with us to the South Seas. I just got a letter from him. But that is not all. After he had done several trips, he was discovered and the ship confiscated. Later the ship was sold to a captain who rebuilt the ship to suit his purposes."

"Which was?"

"To go to the South Seas on a scientific research mission."

Too stunned to answer we sat there with our own private thoughts. I wondered why people with brilliant ideas so often do not have the abilities to fulfill their dreams, but must live to see inferior minds pick up on their ideas and make them work.

Through Dora we heard that there was an opening in the American Legation, and Kris applied for the job and got it. It was only a temporary job, but we still hadn't decided what we were going to do the rest of our lives and were glad he had a job. We decided to look for a bigger apartment and found one outside Stockholm in an old villa where the top floor had been made over to an apartment. The old widow who owned the place liked us, and we were happy there.

When the job in the American Legation was over, Kris got a job in the Norwegian Legation where I worked. That was also temporary, but the money was good, and the privileges that came with the job even better. The Norwegian refugees who returned to Norway got all their debts paid up, and we processed the claims. If Brocken had wanted, he could have had his debt for the ship paid for. But he didn't think it was right that the Government should pay for his follies, so he decided against it. He paid some down on his debt, but in the long run it was Bengt who had to pay, since Brocken never had any money.

A few months after the peace in Europe, Norway decided to change their monies. The Germans had printed too much paper and it was worthless. To be sure that the profiteers didn't cash in, the people could only exchange as much money as they had in the bank before the war started, and it had to be done before a certain date.

The bank in which we had exchanged the Norwegian kroner for Swedish called Kris a couple of days before the deadline in Norway and told him that he could get the Norwegian kroner he had last exchanged, because the bank had no use for them. We were both stunned and overjoyed, but now the questions arose on how we were going to get the money into Norway without being discovered.

Brocken decided that it would be easier for him than for us to cross the border with the money, because he was sure he wouldn't be searched. He was, after all, a University Professor and his name was well known. He thought the best way to get there was to fly, and although he was afraid of flying, he was willing to take the risk. We discussed back and forth where he would keep the money, in his luggage or in his briefcase, but decided that a moneybelt would do the job. There wasn't much time to spare, and we rushed around to get the needed ticket and material to make a moneybelt. I was up most of the night to get it ready. Brocken, who was long and lanky, looked like a

well-fed man after he was fully dressed. We joked and laughed, but we were all anxious. The war was over and this time it wasn't the Germans we were out to fool, but the Government. We rationalized that I had been forced to withdraw money from the bank and it would be perfectly legal for me to put that money back again. Brocken also had had a small bank account when he left, and he would put that back. We all agreed to leave the money there until such time as we needed it for our travel to America. Fortunately all went well with Brocken and his adventure, and our travel monies were secure should the visa come through.

We had heard nothing about our visas to America, and Kris kept telling me that we would never get them. We both had jobs, we had a nice place to live, the widow who rented the place to us did most of my cooking and cleaning just because she was nice, and we lived a charmed life. Kris started hinting that he wanted a baby. At first I said no, a baby didn't fit into my life right then, I was not ready to stay home and cook and clean and take care of a baby. I remembered too well when Doris and I had visited a school friend who had married at seventeen and had a baby at eighteen. The baby was cranky, the apartment in a mess and we had no chance to visit. We felt so sorry for our friend at that time and decided that we certainly were not going to end up the same way.

But Kris was insistent. He said he would help caring for the baby. It would be good for both of us to have a little child to love and care for. I argued that our jobs wouldn't last and what would he do for a living in Sweden? He said we would worry about that when the time came - and he quoted our friend, the widow: "We have a lot of worries in our lives, and most of the worries never come through, so why worry?" I still worry, Kris doesn't.

So long, Jesse. In the next letter I will write more.

Love Grandma .

CHAPTER SIX

February 18, 1991

Dear Jesse,

So sweet of you to have Kiva bring me a rose for Valentine's Day. Thank you very much.

Back to my story. Aunt Rose and Uncle Karl had moved back to Norway and got an apartment in the same building they lived in before. I talked to Rose before she moved and asked if she was still seeing Gunnar. She said he still wanted to marry her, and he would come to Norway to visit her.

"What are you going to do. Are you going to marry him?"

"Of course not. I am never leaving my Kalle."

"Does Kalle know that you are lovers?"

"No, he takes it all as a big joke. That's fine with me. It makes it possible for me to do what I want."

"Which is?"

"Be serious, this won't last forever. What's wrong in having some fun."

I didn't pursue the subject.

Brocken had sold my book to Aschehoug & Company, the most prestigious publishing company in Norway. On one of the trips to Oslo, Nell and Harry gave a party for us with both old and new friends to celebrate my homecoming, my book, and my marriage.

Everybody who had helped with my escape was there, except Finn. He had died of cancer only a few months before the war was over. It was so sad that a young and brave person like him didn't even get a chance to see the war end.

Nils was there, alone. I had met him briefly in Stockholm after I was married, and had hardly recognized my big saving hero. Now we hugged and talked as old friends. He teased me and said I had had a big crush on him. I laughed:

"Of course I did. Think about it: Here I was, a young unprotected girl hunted by the Germans and along comes a big handsome man to rescue me from certain death, or something much worse. What did you expect? It was nice of you not to take advantage of me."

They were all eager to read my book when it came out in Norwegian. It was designated to come out in the Spring of 1946. They wanted to know if they were in it. I tried to tell them that only the events were real, not the people, but to no avail. They wanted to be in it, and I knew they would see themselves wherever they wanted.

I had the strangest feeling being there with all these people I loved so dearly, some whom I had known from second grade in school, and others only briefly. I had changed so much that I felt removed from them and their lives. The last three years we

had had totally different experiences. They had suffered through hunger and fear in a war-raved country, and I had lived a charmed life in freedom although my personal loss was always present in the back of my mind. My past was over. I could barely remember my childhood, and with every heartbeat I thought: "I have to get away, I must get away." I was about to enter another phase of my life, encounter new things, try my wings, so to speak. The little family I had left gave me no pleasure because Aunt Rose and Nusse were always feuding, and I didn't want to be in the middle. Fortunately my childhood memories returned after a time, when I dared to look back.

Everybody came to the party with something they had saved from our sealed apartment. One person came with the copper table. He was sorry he didn't have the top to it, but he had given it to Finn who had hidden it and nobody knew where. They had looked high and low but to no avail. I was glad to get any of the things back again. They gave me a little sense of continuity.

Jesse, you remember the copper table with all the trolls carved in it. The other day we were talking about it to some friends, and I told them how the top had been folded over and later hammered out so that it was hard to see the bend if one didn't know about it. Your father was here, and he exclaimed:

"I remember when it came from Norway in a huge package. I

must have been nine or ten years old, and I remember you telling me how it was found. Someone was refinishing their house, and when they broke up the wall, there was the copper top, hidden inside. Amazing, isn't it, that they knew immediately to whom it belonged, and that they had it restored and sent over here? I think that is quite a story."

I agree with your father. Sometimes incredible fiction cannot beat the events of a true story as in this instance, and it also shows the difference in societies. Norway is a small society, and Oslo at that time had about 300,000 citizens. The population was 98% literate; the city had six or seven daily newspapers, and a book-store almost on every corner. The people who found the table top knew immediately that it had been hidden during the war and that it probably had belonged to a Jewish family. It would have been one of my friends or my brother who had it restored before they sent it to me. I don't recall that now. In a larger society I doubt that this would have happened.

Back again in Sweden Kris was introduced to Bengt. He saw immediately that the relationship between us had been more than that of a writer and translator and asked me about it. I told him the truth. Bengt meant a lot to me, he had been there when I needed him, and had it not been for Brocken's constant presence, there might have been more to tell. We left it at that. But a strange relationship developed between Bengt and us,

a friendship that has lasted through all these years and still does. We have visited him and his second wife, Linnea, in Sweden, and they have visited us here. I must tell you here that Bengt's first wife divorced him and mentioned me as the source for the divorce although by that time I had already been in America a couple of years. The real reason was that she had found another man to whom she would rather be married. I can understand that, but not the choice she did; she married a Nazi. Bengt went through years of court battle for the custody of his two children, which he finally won.

As soon as we were back in Stockholm Kris started to talk about a baby again. Nothing seemed to be happening to our visas to America, and the more Kris talked the more intriguing the idea of a baby became. At last I agreed to try, but nothing happened for a couple of months, and we both became afraid that we couldn't have a baby. Thus started a period of intense lovemaking which finally resulted in my being pregnant with your father.

It was almost incomprehensible to me that inside of my body another human being was growing. It seemed like a miracle, which indeed it is. And I felt that this wonder had never happened to anyone else before. My doctor was old and oldfashioned, he thought I was too thin and ordered me to PUT ON WEIGHT. Can you believe it, I drank cream to put on weight.

I wish I had been a little better informed about my body and nutrition at that time. It would have helped me with the weight problem I've had to fight the rest of my life.

I knew nothing about babies and very little about my body. My mother hadn't told me anything, and my curiosity hadn't gone in that direction. Kris kept telling me that to have a baby was after all the most natural thing in the world, I was healthy, and when the baby was due it would come. The only thing I knew was that childbirth was painful, and since I was afraid of pain, I asked no questions. There was no Dr. Spock to read, and in those days nobody talked much about pregnancies. I kept on doing what I had before, working every day, going back and forth to Norway as often as I could. We still lived in the same place, the widow continued to prepare meals for us and clean the apartment. She was excited by the prospect of a baby in the house. We knew we eventually would have to look for another place to live when the baby got bigger, but for the moment we lived the good life.

It was about March 1946 when the bombshell fell: The visas to America came through! We were dumbfounded because nobody got visas to America after the war. We had already settled down, a baby was on the way, due in three months, and what were we to do? Always the philanthropist, Brocken had written the Rockefeller Foundation and asked them to give his grant to another scientist who also wanted to study in America and who had a wife and

daughter to support. But he still wanted to go. He thought it would be a great opportunity for all of us, and I got my sense of adventure back. Kris was the one who thought we ought to consider this move very carefully.

I came to the conclusion that we didn't really give up anything. Our jobs would be over in about another year, and if I could get my book translated to English, I could sell it and we could live happily ever after. Brocken had no doubt that my book would be published in America. After all, two countries had already published it, and the time was ripe. In the meantime I would get paid for the book in Norway, and we already had some money in the bank, enough for travel expenses and to live for a while. Our visa was only for a year, but we thought if we wanted to stay longer, we would manage. After all, we had been able to get visas to the most desirable place on earth - the United States of America, a place where the opportunities were enormous, a place where you could almost find gold on the streets. I made up my mind. I was going.

Kris was skeptical and painted the picture black. We didn't know anybody there, he couldn't work in the theater because of the language, and he didn't know how to do anything else. I said I could take care of myself, and the baby, and him too if it was necessary. Besides my book was going to sell, so what was he worried about. I would go, no matter what. I was pretty

independent, Jesse, little did I know how difficult it was going to be.

There was still a lot to do. Kris got recommendations to film studios and the Pasadena Playhouse. I got a Foreign Correspondent card from "Dagbladet" by promising to send articles from Hollywood. We booked passage on a ship that was leaving in early May. Rolle thought we were out of our minds, but nothing he said could convince me that I was wrong. He said over and over again: "Are you sure this is what you would like to do?" and I answered every time, "Yes, yes."

Everything was ready to go. We had said goodbye to our families, cried a little before we were going back to Sweden to finish our commitments there, and then a call came from Brocken in Stockholm. He needed another paper from someplace, and it would take some time to get. We should get ready to go, and he would come on the next boat.

Kris exploded! Brocken was the one who had, as Rolle said, lured us into this trip to the Promised Land, and now HE WAS BACKING OUT. No, Kris said, Brocken was going with us. If we left him behind, he would never come, and it would be impossible for the two of us to go alone to a country we didn't know, where people spoke a language we didn't speak, with a baby due a month after we arrived, with very little money and no agent to handle

the publication of my book in the States. Brocken was going, or we all stayed home. However, for us to stay home now was unthinkable, even Kris said that - there had been too much bragging, too much bravado. We were about to embark on great things. If we weren't exactly going to find gold on the streets, we surely would find it in other places.

This was the first time I had seen Kris in action outside of the theater. He found out which papers Brocken needed and set out to get them. That Kris was able to get papers that Brocken could not led me to believe that Brocken had second thoughts about his whole idea. But that he was willing to let the inexperienced two of us, soon to become three, go alone so far away without protection from him, shook me. That was the first time I lost confidence in him, and I told myself not ever to be dependent upon anyone again, not ever to believe in anyone that much again. It was a rude awakening, but I was glad the awakening came that early. It made me a little more prepared for the adversities we were to encounter.

Looking back at the beginning of our stay in the States, I see that Brocken never fulfilled any of his promises, and had we gone by ourselves we would have made it the same way we did, because everything we accomplished we did by ourselves. When we first started to talk about our dreams of going to America, Brocken had the Rockefeller Foundation Grant, and I was promised

to be his assistant. That he gave away. He was going to sell my book. That fell through. It wasn't his fault, but nevertheless it never materialized. The jobs Kris and I managed to get we did on our own. But Brocken was great moral support the first year, and he helped with the papers we needed to immigrate to this country. I will tell you more about it some other time, because now I must stop.

I love you, big guy.

Grandma

CHAPTER ONE

The scene was the railroad station in Oslo the day before we were to embark on the ship in Gøteborg where we would meet Brocken. I had said my farewells to Rose and Kalle the night before and true to herself, Rose had cried and wailed. Rolle, Nusse and little Terje were at the station to see us off. Terje was a cute three years old and I had become very attached to him lately. We had hugged Rolle and Nusse, and I was hugging Terje when he started to cry uncontrollably. We couldn't quiet him. It was O.K. that he was crying because everybody was so intent on having him stop that nobody else cried. After some last hugs, we hopped on the train that took off almost immediately. Terje's screams were ringing in my ears all the way to Gøteborg.

We boarded a Swedish liner. Maybe it had been nice once, but now it just seemed old and full. There were twice as many passengers than the ship had been built for, most of them Jewish refugees from Germany who had families in America. We had cabins on the upper deck, for which I was grateful. It was a small cabin but at least Kris and I had it to ourselves. Brocken had to share his cabin, and he had the lower berth. He wasn't too happy that he had to share the cabin, but when he saw how crowded people were on the lower deck, he calmed down.

From the beginning Brocken complained that the upper berth squeaked so much that he was afraid it would fall on him. Kris assured him that no such thing was going to happen, the springs just needed oil. But Brocken's complaints never stopped. It was the first time I had seen him so obsessed with anything. He insisted that something was dreadfully wrong, but we only laughed when he mentioned it. I was getting pretty tired of his laments.

Although the sea was calm and beautiful, not even a wave to rock the boat, the journey turned out to be grueling for me. I was seasick from the first moment I stepped on board until I got my feet on the ground again. Everything I ate came back up so I stopped eating anything but dry crackers and water. Even that didn't stay down. The ship's doctor came to see me every day and gave me shots and pills to help with the seasickness, but nothing helped. I spent as much time as possible on deck in the fresh air in a lounge chair, usually with Brocken at my side. Kris was too busy meeting people and having a good time. I was glad he enjoyed himself. The last thing I needed was his pessimism. I longed to get off the ship and have my baby. I only hoped I wouldn't deliver during the journey itself. My back hurt, my feet were swollen, I was so big I couldn't even tie my shoes. Being pregnant definitely was not my thing. The trip became one blurry awful ordeal.

Somehow, in between all this, I met Cica and her mother, Roszi. Kris came with them one day and introduced us. They were from Czechoslovakia, now divided into the Check Republic and Slovakia. They came from a concentration camp in Poland via Stockholm. They both had numbers burned on their wrists. I cried when I saw them. They talked several languages though not much English. We made conversation with a few words in English, French, German and Swedish and by more or less using our arms and bodies as sign language. It was amazing how much we found out about each other that way.

We soon became real friends, a friendship that lasted a very long time. I kept up the contact with Roszi until she died, but the contact with Cica stopped some years before. She didn't answer any of my letters. I learned from Roszi that she was very unhappy because she was losing her sight. I wish I knew what happened to her.

We made one other acquaintance that led to a Jewish dinner at the Lower East Side of Brooklyn. We asked an American Jew where in New York we could go for Jewish food, and he promptly invited us to his mother's house. He warned us that she didn't speak any English, although she had been in America a lifetime, but she was a fantastic cook. We, of course, accepted the invitation with great expectations. Later, when we got to her place, I wasn't at all surprised to find that she lived in a

walk-up coldwater flat in a very poor neighborhood, in spite of the fact that her son was prosperous. I had read several books about immigrants in America and this fitted right into what I had learned in the literature. His mother didn't want to leave her home, he explained, this was where she had lived when she arrived from Russia, this was the place she had lived with her deceased husband, this was where she wanted to die. Her flat was spotless, the food excellent, and although we couldn't talk to each other, except for a few words in Yiddish, we let our feelings show, and that was enough. It was an experience I wouldn't have missed. Unfortunately we lost contact with them. It was hard at that time to keep up with everybody we met.

Thirteen long days it took to cross the ocean. That is a long time when you are constantly seasick. Kris and Brocken had a good time. They both worried about me a lot, but that didn't keep them from talking to people and enjoying the trip and the meals. Brocken was concerned about the people on the lower deck, and every time they had a complaint, they came to him. He then took the complaint to the captain, who improved the situation where it could be improved. It might not have been comfortable to travel below, because the ship had too many people, but conditions were far better than after World War I when so many immigrants came to America.

Not a day went by that Brocken didn't tell us about the squeaky berth over his head. He was convinced that it would fall on his head and kill him. I was getting tired of his old maid manners and told him to complain to the captain. He complained constantly for the people on the lower deck, let him for once speak for himself. He said he would do that, but he never did. Kris just laughed at him and tried to assure him that nothing would happen.

But it did! Brocken came storming out one day and stuttered so hard that we couldn't understand what had happened. When he finally did make himself understood it was again about the upper berth. He had found it in his lower berth that morning.

"It fell right where my head would have been," he shouted. "I could have been killed. It is terrible that a thing like this could happen."

I had never seen him so excited before and didn't know what to answer. Then I looked at Kris, and we both started to laugh so hard that we couldn't stop. Brocken was deeply offended. He kept repeating: "I could have been killed, I could have been killed, and here you laugh at it. Preposterous!" I said I was sorry, but I couldn't stop laughing. He turned away and left us.

We went down to look at the wreck and Brocken was right, it really could have killed him. It should have been a sobering experience, but somehow Kris and I still couldn't stop laughing.

It must have been the absurd in the situation that got to us. How often does an incredible prediction like that hold true?

Another day the three of us sat on the deck and discussed our objectives. Kris said:

"When I look at these people I understand why they want to emigrate. They have no country. But what about us? We have a country, a very good country. There is no reason for us to emigrate." He looked at me and continued: "I understand why you want to leave, and I go because I want to be with you. But why are you going, Brocken?"

And Brocken hesitated a little before he answered.

"People who live in a dictatorship want to emigrate to be free. I think it is a duty to emigrate as soon as the state denies you to leave. Then people outside the border can take up the fight for freedom."

"I asked why YOU want to emigrate. You know there is no dictatorship in Norway. There are certain difficulties now after the war, but wouldn't it have been better to stay home and help build up the country?"

"There are many people who say I desert the country by leaving it when it has difficulties. But I feel differently about it. When the state takes over too much power, there is always a danger for a dictatorship. Right now you have to ask one department to open a store, another department will tell you

where to get your merchandise, then another if you can operate in the community you choose. That is not a democracy. If a dictatorship should arise, I could do more for my country outside the borders than inside."

"You are not emigrating to help your country in need," I said drily. "You want to make your own ideal state to prove to the world that it can be done."

"America is the only place where I would even have a chance to come close to my dream, " Brocken admitted.

"There won't be many possibilities to accomplish anything if we can't make a living," Kris sighed.

Our discussion went on for some time. Brocken maintained that the capitalistic America was the only place where dreams could still become realities, Kris insisted that we would need money to realize anything, and I thought I could see an end to discrimination in one way or another, unaware of how much of it existed in the States. I think we needed to convince ourselves that there were good reasons why we left everything familiar for a new country on another continent, where everything would be unknown, where we had no friends, very little money, and not to mention a baby about to be born less than a month after we were to arrive at Los Angeles, our destination.

Two days later we saw our first glimpse of the Statue of Liberty. Early in the morning the deck was filled with excited

people talking and running and trying to see. Children were lifted up on their parents' shoulders, the more athletic ones had climbed high up on the lifeboats and masts. As the ship came nearer a hush fell and when the majestic Lady was in full sight, a churchlike stillness fell over everything.

There she stood, commanding, immovable, proudly extending a Welcome to the Land of the Free as if saying: I am real, I am no dream. Come, come, now it is up to you.

I was thinking: *And thus they sailed into the harbor of their chosen country, born anew, clean and free, and Lazarus' poem came alive:*

"... With silent lips. 'Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.' "

CHAPTER TWO

Before docking in New York, we had to fill out endless forms asking questions: ARE YOU INSANE? DO YOU WANT TO KILL THE PRESIDENT? DO YOU WANT TO KILL ONLY THE PRESIDENT, OR DO YOU WANT TO KILL THE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TOO?, etc.etc.. We thought the questions were preposterous. If we wanted to do any of those things, we certainly wouldn't advertise it. But we laughed and had to comply. When the time came to leave the ship, we had no trouble. I had been afraid that I would be held at Ellis Island because I was pregnant, but nobody mentioned my pregnancy. I wore a big wide coat and probably just looked fat. In any case, when I stepped on the ground of New York and was far away from the authorities, I was much relieved.

The three of us took a taxi to the Norwegian Seaman Hotel in Brooklyn where we had already reserved rooms. Our luggage consisted of a big trunk and hand luggage. It was interesting to see how Kris managed to drag the trunk around to all the places we stayed in our early days in America. I had taken quite a few books with me, so it was heavy. Kris never complained. His philosophy of "there is no use to complain about things one cannot change" helped a lot in the beginning, because things didn't always go the way we had expected.

When we ordered rooms at the Seaman Hotel, we didn't take into consideration the cockroaches that usually follow the

seamen. The hotel was full of them. They didn't bother Kris because they didn't bite him, but they did bother me.

Breakfast and dinner were included in the price of the room. The meals were buffet style and plenty. All kinds of delicious food encircled the enormous turkey in the middle every night, and for us who had lived through a war for five years, the amount of food was overwhelming.

The enormousness of everything was wonderous. Kris told me years later that he had been scared out of his mind when he saw New York, the Desert of Stone, as he called it. But for me it was stimulating. I had new energy now when I was no longer seasick, and I wanted to see the sights. We learned to take the subway, and every day we went some place special. Fortunately we were used to walking, and we walked miles to see the Rockefeller Center and the U.N. and the Empire State Building. We knew approximately what we wanted to see in the few days we planned to stay.

One of the first things we did was to see a literary agent, whose name had been suggested to us in Stockholm. When he heard that the book needed to be translated, he wasn't the least interested, and that shook me considerably. It had been so easy to get the book published in Scandinavia, and Brocken's promises still rang in my ears: "They will have a translator there, don't

worry about it." When he continued with his assurances, I didn't listen, my faith in him quite diminished. But I hoped that I would get the book translated when we were a little more settled, and then we could try again. In the meantime we would see as much of the East Coast as possible.

The one thing that affected me the most was the heat. It was the middle of May in New York, hot and humid, and for us who were used to much colder climate, the heat was a bother. But there was so much to absorb everywhere, I couldn't let the heat keep me from seeing the wonders I had read about. In a cafe I saw a man eating corn on the cob, which I had never seen before. I saw a lady eating a banana split, and asked Kris to get me one. I ate two bites. It was too sweet for me, but Kris liked it and finished his own and mine. Every night we came back drenched with sweat but full of new impressions.

Through the friend to whom Brocken had forfeited his grant, Kris got an engagement to read poetry in a church in Philadelphia. For this he would get free travel and hotel and a small fee. I went along and we were delighted to be able to see all the historical sites we had read about. What I remember most from that trip, however, was the huge park dividing the city. We drove through it and thought it would never end. Another thing I remember was our hotel room that had a double

bed and a private bathroom with both a tub and shower. I had never slept on a double bed before and thought it was the epitomy of luxury.

Kris had also gotten an introduction to the MGM studios, and we went to their office in Manhattan. To our big surprise and delight we were presented with tickets to the Radio City Hall where we saw the Rockettes and the movie "To Each His Own," for which Olivia de Haviland later received an Oscar. We also got tickets to another of MGM's movies, and we thought we were treated royally. I can't possibly remember all the places we went, but thinking about it now, I was surprised I was able to get around so much. The doctor in Sweden had told me that the baby was due in the middle of June, and by that time we would be in Los Angeles and would worry about the baby then. We must have had the abundant energy and optimism so typical of youth, and we literally lived one day at the time.

After fourteen days on the East Coast we left on the Pullman for Los Angeles. All I remember from the train ride was ineffable boredom, and a train that shook so badly that I was afraid the baby would shake loose. I was disappointed about the train. Whenever I had taken the night train from Oslo to Copenhagen, I had had a compartment with a washroom occupied by only one other person. Traveling on a Pullman was void of any privacy except in your berth. It was difficult for me to dress

and undress in that little space. Somehow I had expected everything in America to be bigger and better than in other countries.

After five long days we arrived at the station in Los Angeles and tried to be enthusiastic about being in California, but what we saw was a dinky, dirty little station with a few ugly palm trees. We faked excitement over the palm trees that we had never seen before and hurried to take the local train to our hotel room in Long Beach. We had been in contact with the Norwegian Embassy in Los Angeles which had secured hotel rooms for us for the first couple of nights. I found the heat disconcerting.

We soon learned that the transportation system in Los Angeles was minimal. There was a local train system and a bus once in a while. I don't remember how we got around in the beginning, we must have used the train and bus system to the utmost because we did not have money for taxis, and we went everywhere. The Norwegian Seaman Church was located in San Pedro, and when Kris presented his papers there, he was immediately asked to recite poems in the Church. The pay was little, but we met some people that way, especially Judith and Einar, who became our good friends and mentors from the beginning.

Through the Embassy we rented a room with kitchen privileges from a woman who was married to a Norwegian. Her husband was spending the year in Norway, and the woman didn't mind having us and the baby in the house while he was gone. It was a pleasant room in a pleasant house and very central. Two blocks away was a small private obstetrics clinic and as soon as we were settled in our room, we went to see one of the doctors. He was extremely friendly and promised to take care of me. But first he wanted me to lose some weight. I was flabbergasted and told him that my doctor in Sweden had wanted me to put on weight. Kris, who had spoken more English than I, was with me, and somehow we had quite a conversation. The doctor set the time of delivery for around the middle of June, which was only two weeks away. The Swedish doctor had been out of touch with the modern ways, but he had been right about the baby's arrival date. The new doctor sounded so reassuring, it made me feel good. There was a baby doctor connected with the clinic, and his office was only a block from where I lived. I was all set.

One day Kris was gone, and the landlady asked me to go on an errand for her to the drugstore. When I came back the house was filled with ladies and gift packages. I was introduced to the ladies, and it turned out that they all had Norwegian connections and belonged to the same club. I innocently asked:

"Is it somebody's birthday?"

They laughed and the landlady answered:

"Someone is going to have one."

I still didn't understand a thing, but everybody seemed to have a lot of fun, so I pretended I understood why they were laughing and joined in the fun. Then the landlady put a chair in the middle of the room and asked me to sit in it. I thought they were going to play games, which I hate, but I complied. She put all the gifts around me and asked me to open them.

"For me?", I asked, "But it isn't my birthday."

Baby showers were so foreign to me that they had to explain every single step before I understood what was going on. I was astonished over the generosity of all these people I didn't even know, and embarrassed to the core. Neither did I know that a baby required all these things, and I had to ask for an explanation of every gift. The ladies were delighted to answer questions and having surprised me so completely, at least I supplied them with an afternoon of merriment. Later I was glad for every thing I had received and always thought of that incident with thanks in my heart.

Time went slowly for me. But Kris didn't waste any. He knew that Sonja Henie was in Hollywood, and since he had skated with her when she was training at Bislet, he contacted her. She immediately invited us both for dinner, but I didn't want to meet

new people in my condition, and Kris went by himself. He came home starry-eyed from all the important people he had met at her place, and didn't stop talking about it.

As the days went by I became more and more uncomfortable and cranky and had just one thought in my head: Let the baby come. The nineteenth of June in the evening, Brocken, Kris and I went to see "She Wore a Yellow Ribbon." I rememeber the name of the movie, but nothing of the movie itself. Jan was born on the twentieth of June 1946, and he was an American citizen.

CHAPTER THREE

I opened my eyes and looked right down into a pair of bright, black eyes in a face no bigger than the palm of my hand. I closed my eyes again and the next time I woke up the little human in my arms was asleep. It had been a hard birth and I had been given drugs at the end, so I didn't remember the delivery itself. It was over and now a living soul who had developed inside my body was in my arms sleeping. It was an incredible thought. I touched his hand with my finger and was amazed at its softness. He was so vulnerable, so helpless. It was up to me to care for him, to see that he was safe and happy. An anxious feeling of responsibility overwhelmed me. Would I be capable of caring for this little human being? I didn't know the first thing about babies. He had to be fed, clothed, kept clean, and I was in charge. Could I do it?

When he opened his eyes again I gave him a silent promise, he would not need or want. From this day on consideration for him would come before anything else. I suddenly realized that my whole life would totally change. We no longer could have this haphazard indifference to where we lived and how we ate. Our immediate concern could no longer be the planning of distant goals, but the planning of a home for this new, precious human life, a home with security and love. And all the love that had been bottled up in me for so long, love for my father and

brothers, and for my mother, this abundance of love would now be offered to a tiny newborn life - my son. Would he be strong enough to hold all this love? A sudden longing for my mother overwhelmed me.

Looking down at his grimacing face, never still for a moment, I was filled with pride and joy. Here was a new life in a new country born to new parents. All our hopes, wishes and dreams were concentrated in one little bundle of human flesh where every particle was put together in a perfect shape, a finger, a toe, an ear. By what? I remembered a conversation I had with Bengt about religion and God and understood what he meant when he said that he couldn't deny God when he looked at his baby. God or no God, my gratitude over this new life renewed my hope for a meaningful future.

I suddenly felt thankful to Kris for giving me this new life. My love for my baby couldn't be perfect without love for his father. I felt that my frozen heart had been set free, and I cried for a long time.

They kept me in the hospital for ten days, and I was not allowed up except to go to the bathroom. The entire hospital and doctor fees came to an even three hundred dollars, a lot of money then. The baby doctor came to visit us in the hospital and told me that he would be seeing us every week to weigh the baby, and

he would give me instructions of how to care for the child and what to expect from him every time.

I remember the day we went home, Kris carrying the baby the two blocks we had to walk. I had to hurry to the drugstore to get formula and bottles, because I wasn't able to nurse. Then I had to hurry back and sterilize everything I was to use, and make the formula. I was frantic because the baby was crying and I was scared.

The year we were promised to stay in the house turned out to be only two months. The landlady said her husband was coming back sooner than expected, but I thought she probably hadn't expected all the commotion in her house that a baby brought. She had no children of her own, and I was in the kitchen four times a day sterilizing and fetching things for the baby. I never cooked a meal. We mostly ate bread and cheese and drank milk, because we didn't want to occupy the premises too much. Thinking about it now I can understand the lady, but I felt quite betrayed at that time. How could she be so kind on the one hand, and on the other so heartless as to put a family with a baby out on the street? The absurdities of the country made itself known to us very soon.

Brocken had been in contact with a Norwegian couple who had settled down in Hollywood. I don't remember the connection, but

she came to our rescue. She was in her forties and had just had a baby, completely unexpected, but both she and her husband were delighted. Martha was a big help to us in the beginning. She was a registered nurse and her husband a masseur. He worked on many of the movie personnel in Hollywood, although not on the stars. But Martha assured me that he was so good that it wouldn't take long before he was on the top. He was also practicing homoeopathy, which at that time in Norway was considered quackery.

Martha knew of a person in North Long Beach who worked nights and slept days, and she wanted somebody to occupy her house so that it looked like people lived there. We could stay there for free if we only would watch the house for her. I was sorry to leave the closeness of the baby doctor, but there was a bus that went every two hours so I could at least use the same doctor. We made the move as soon as we found out that we could stay there, for I detested to be in a place where I was not wanted.

I asked Martha to tell the next landlady that I was Jewish. Martha couldn't understand why I didn't deny being Jewish, because I didn't look it. I told her I would never deny my heritage, and that difference in thinking prevented us from becoming real friends. But Martha had taken us under her wing, and she supplied us with all her son's used baby clothes and baby

buggy and high chair, all the things that I normally would have had to buy, but couldn't afford. I didn't even have a chance to be proud and say no thank you, she just brought it all over. She also moved us out to Anne, our new land lady. I had to tell myself not to be too dependent on her, it wouldn't be good for any of us. It is so easy to let others take over your life when you feel vulnerable.

Anne, our new landlady, was a strange person. She seemed delighted to have us there, and wanted to do things for us all the time. She never wanted us to touch her room and we didn't. It was a total mess. When I asked if I could do the dishes she left in the sink she said no. I understand now that coming from a different culture where yes meant yes and no meant no, I should have taken the dishes and kept the kitchen clean without asking. I cleaned up after us, but I didn't dare touch her things. We offered to pay rent, but she didn't want any. Kris asked if he could do something with the yard, which looked like a junkyard, and she allowed that. So he worked hard at putting in a lawn and some stone steps leading up to the door.

Brocken visited us every day, and we sat in the living room talking when Anne came home from work in the late mornings. We knew she wanted to cook her own breakfast, so we kept out of the kitchen. It was natural for us to speak in Norwegian, and one day she said jokingly, we thought, that she thought we spoke

about her. We should have taken the hint then, but the difference in culture made us oblivious of the rage she harbored because we talked in a language she didn't understand. If she had been in the room with us, we would have talked English, of course, but she was not.

When Anne was in good humour, we breathed easy, but when she had had a bad day at work, we kept out of her way as much as possible. We asked Brocken to visit us later in the day when she slept, and then we lowered our voices when we talked. Jan, the little angel, was nothing but pure joy, healthy and happy and delightful. Every week I got a sheet of paper from the doctor telling me how much he had progressed and what to expect for the next week. It was more difficult to get him to the doctor, but we figured out when the busses went, and made appointments accordingly.

I must now write about an incident that makes me shudder when I think about it, but it happened. I had been having troubles with my knees, and took the bus down to the doctor's office. Kris stayed home with the baby. It was hot that day and I stood at the bus stop waiting for the bus. I had been waiting quite a while and felt extremely weak. I longed to sit down, but there was no bench in sight. A car went by me and then made a u-turn and stopped in front of me. The man in the car rolled down the window and asked:

"Do you want a ride?"

"Where are you going?" I asked, "I live in North Long Beach."

"That's where I am going. Hop in. It's too hot to wait for the bus."

"Oh, thank you so much," I answered, quite relieved that I didn't have to stand on my feet any longer.

In the car I began to talk very fast to let him know how thankful I was about getting a ride home to my husband and baby in this dreadful heat, that I wasn't feeling very well, and I thought he was a nice man who would do me this favor. He understood that I was a newcomer to this country and asked several questions, which I answered as well as I could. At one point he put his hand on my knee, and I pushed it away immediately. I asked what business he was in and he said he was in real estate and was just going out to a house he was building to see how it was coming along.

"How nice it would be to have a house of your own," I sighed.

"Do you want to see it?" he asked, it is just on the way.

"That would be nice," I said to be polite. I was so tired and hot and longed to get home and lie down.

We stopped outside a half built house, and we both got out. He showed me around and explained where everything was, and I was very interested and attentive.

"I have to tell my husband about it," I said. "One day we will have a house like that."

We went back in the car and he took me straight home. I invited him in for a cup of coffee, but he said he didn't have time. I asked him to stop and say hello to Kris, but he didn't have time for that either.

I told Kris what had happened, and he also thought it was nice that I had gotten a ride home instead of waiting for the bus. In Norway the most natural thing to do was to offer someone a ride when it was needed. But when I told Anne about it she was horrified. She told me that I never, but never, should accept a ride with anybody, and she told me some terrifying stories about women getting into a car with an unknown man. It was just one more of the incidents that contrasted the two different cultures. I am glad it was a decent man who picked me up. He might not have had altruistic motives in the beginning, but he at least didn't make me suffer for being naive.

CHAPTER FOUR

We stayed at Anne's through Thanksgiving and Christmas and well into the New Year. Thanksgiving was a new holiday for us, since Norway did not celebrate Thanksgiving. Martha invited us all to dinner at her house, and we had a pleasant time. Thanksgiving has turned out to be a cherished holiday for me. Before we moved to Missouri to be with our family, we spent it with friends in Oregon and California, and now it is one of the few times the whole family *come* together for a holiday meal.

Anne had been obsessed with Christmas since the beginning of December when she brought home a large tree, which she decorated bit by bit every day. It surprised me that the Americans put up Christmas decorations and played Christmas music so long in advance, and also *that* the stores completely changed to Christmas items weeks before the holidays started.

The Norwegians celebrated Christmas differently. They started their celebration on Christmas Eve and continued until the thirteenth day of Christmas. Two holidays followed Christmas Eve. The day to which the children were looking forward was Christmas Eve. Early in the afternoon of that day the church bells all over the city started to ring, and everything became quiet. The stores closed, the clanging of the streetcars

stopped, and people disappeared from the streets. It was a very solemn time. The Eve was when the children's first sight of the decorated Christmas tree took place. After a big family dinner, Santa would come with the presents, usually only one present for each person. After they were finished opening the presents, everybody would link their hands together and step around and around the tree singing Christmas carols and hymns.

I talk in the third person here, because in our home we did not celebrate Christmas. I know about the customs from my friends and from books, and from some personal experiences. A couple of times when I was around ten years old, and when my parents were gone and my brothers had other things to do, I would go with our housekeeper, Asta, to her friend's house on Christmas Eve. They would always ask me to join them in walking around the tree, but that was so foreign to me that I would decline and just watch from a corner.

The first Christmas Day was a true Holiday. Nothing was open except for a few eating places. Stores, movies, theaters and restaurants were closed. The streetcars and buses operated only at certain times. That was a day when families visited each other and tasted each others "Yulboard" which consisted of all kinds of good foods, head-cheese, sausages, pickled herring, meatballs, lefse, Christmas-cake and all sorts of cookies and marzipan. The city was as quiet as it was on Christmas Eve.

People who never went to church other times, observed services on Christmas. The second Christmas day, however, everything was open except businesses. The streets were crowded with pedestrians, and the street cars started clanging as usual in the afternoon. In the evenings the movies and the theaters were full and so were the restaurants. A festive mood surrounded the city.

Between Christmas and New Year's the Christmas parties took place, and family members who had not seen each other yet, visited. In the country little groups of carolers came around in horse-driven sleighs. Yes, those Christmas cards from the beginning of the century picturing a white Christmas with a sleigh and horses and carolers huddled together in warm blankets, are really true. Everywhere, the church clubs and other organizations had Christmas parties with food and drinks, and afterwards they all held hands and danced around the tree. Before they departed the children were given bags of candy, sometimes also extended to the adults, who were appreciative, because candy was not as commonplace as here. Finally after the thirteenth day of Christmas the tree was taken down and the festivities ended.

But here in America all the festivities took place before Christmas. After Christmas morning when the gifts were opened, and the family had gathered for a big dinner, it was over, as if Christmas had never existed. When I mentioned this to Kris, he

said that we should remember that in America the church and state are kept separately, but Norway has a state Lutheran church, and the holidays are observed the way the church fathers saw fit. Another thing to note is that we were in Southern California for our first Christmas here, with its warm weather and sunshine. That accounts for some of the cultural shock we experienced our first year in the United States. The customs and civilizations of different countries never cease to surprise and interest me.

But let me get back to Anne and her early preparations. Every day she put new decorations on the tree and played records of Christmas carols and hymns while she sang along. She wanted to cook a turkey dinner, and invited us all to share it with her, including Brocken, but her unusual working schedule made us observe Christmas a couple of days after the actual day. Every day before the Christmas Celebration she placed a package under the tree, and was secretive and playful about presents. We had never seen her in such good humor before and understood that Christmas was the one thing that had meaning to her. Other than what we observed, we knew nothing about her, except that she had a grown son who was in jail.

Our money supply was getting very low, and to make some extra money, I had been knitting Norwegian sweaters that Martha had sold for me. She furnished the yarn, took only her expenses,

and let me have the rest. I was almost through with another sweater by Christmas time, and since it was quite big and Anne was a large woman, Martha suggested that I give the sweater to her as a Christmas present. I was grateful for that suggestion, otherwise I would not have known what to give her. The celebration went well. Anne had bought a crib for Jan, and she was delighted over the sweater. For a while after Christmas everything went along smoothly.

But the honeymoon didn't last long. One day in the end of January we were a little late in eating breakfast, and I had just put the dishes in the sink to wash as soon as I had taken care of the baby. Brocken and Kris were in the living room discussing politics, and of course they were talking Norwegian. Anne came home earlier than usual and in a foul mood. When she saw the dishes in the sink she immediately started to bang the pots and pans around while muttering to herself. I tried to tell her that I would take care of the dishes in a minute, but that started a long tirade of how inconsiderate foreigners were, the house was dirty, her room looked like hell, and she was sick and tired of having kikes in her house. The last remark she was shouting.

I was stunned, but Kris took action immediately.

"We are getting out of here," he said and gathered up the baby's things. "After what you have been through, you don't need to take this," he told me, and Brocken agreed. Brocken was

calling his hotel to order a room for us, and a taxi to come and pick us up. In the meantime I threw some clothes in a suitcase. Anne had stopped screaming and just finished washing the dishes. She was crying, but didn't say anything. She definitely wanted us out of there. When the taxi came, Kris told her he would be back for our other things as soon as he could. And out we went without looking back.

We found out later that somebody else moved in the same day we departed, so she obviously had promised the others that they could stay at her house as soon as she got rid of us. I suppose we were so different from her that she felt insecure. Here were three foreigners occupying her house and talking a language she didn't understand. We just became too much for her to tolerate. She was not a tolerant person anyway. She always made snide remarks about Mexicans and Afro-Americans. It was no surprise that she didn't like Jews either. It would have been better for everybody, of course, if she had given us notice so that we could have found other quarters. As it turned out, a period of real hardship came our way. When Kris went back to pick up our things from Anne's she told him that her son had been there and had stolen several of our things, and had left again. She was glad he had left, and offered to pay for the stolen goods. She asked Kris not to call the police. Kris told her not to worry about it, and brought back the little we had left. Poor woman, she had such a sad life.

We couldn't afford to stay at the hotel more than a couple of days, and we found a cheap motel. The second day we stayed there, the room was full of flying ants, which scared me almost out of my mind. I had never seen anything like them, and took the baby and ran outside. Kris complained to the management, but they didn't seem to be too concerned. They sprayed the room to get rid of the bugs, but it left such an odious smell, I refused to take the baby back in. We found another place not too far away.

That place was no better. The following morning when I woke up, I took another look around the dreary room. The furniture consisted of the squeaky double bed we slept in, a chest of drawers, and a rickety rocking chair. The original color of the walls had been bright yellow, but streaks of dirt gave it the color of slum. The only window in the room had no curtains, and a bleak light fought its way through the early morning Los Angeles smog. This was the America that overflowed with milk and honey? This was what Brocken's promises had produced? Why were we here? What were we to do? We were trapped, no money, no home, no work. The visa we had didn't allow us to work, so any work we found would be underground, which was both illegal and dangerous. We found ourselves suddenly with no hope, and without hope, what is there?

A rocking sound from the baby's crib signaled that he was awake and would need to be changed and have his breakfast. That sweet little boy had in his first nine months of his life been the only bright spot in our lives. At least he had only known comfort and love. When he was wet he was changed, when he was hungry he was fed, and our overflowing love and attention were his every minute of the day.

I had to make myself get up and go into the bathroom, which we shared with six other families. It was reasonably clean, but the smell of urine made me gag. I washed my face and hands and went into the kitchen which we also shared with the same families. The residents had been there a long time, and didn't seem to mind. They all knew each other and were having a good time. They always talked about "when we are out of here" or "when I have my own home", but one family had lived like this for several years. That scared me more than anything else. I would rather go back to Norway on the expense of the Norwegian Government before I got used to living the way we did now. How could we fight for a cause under these circumstances - a better world indeed!

We were both depressed when Brocken showed up waving a letter in his hand:

"It's from the Methodist minister in Long Beach. He wants to see us. He thinks he has a job for Kris."

"Really," I sighed. "Could the luck have turned?"

"Don't get your hopes up," Kris said. "What kind of a job will it be, a grave-digger?"

"It means food for Jan."

"I know, and if I can get it, I'll take it. But what is so wonderful about coming to America to dig ditches? I could have stayed home to do that."

"Except you wouldn't have done it there, and that's one of the reasons we are here."

We were all too proud to go home as losers and be the laughingstock of family and friends. The bravado with which we so vivid in our minds; we had to stick it out. would go back was if Jan's needs couldn't be But time was getting short. We only had three f our visa. We needed a sponsor to be able to ven with a sponsor we needed means to exist. ty desperate situation.

of despair Kris got a job as a construction week, straightening out old nails. Since his visa forbid him to work, both he and his employer took a risk in his working. But the employer got cheap labor, and Kris got money to feed his family. We had no other choice. It wasn't the best job for his soft violin hands, but it meant rent and food for a while. The first thing we did was to move away from that

ugly and scary atmosphere to a motel situated right by the highway so that Kris could take the bus to work. We could stay there as long as we wanted for a monthly rent of \$110. The unit had a room with a wall-bed, a bath and a small kitchen. It wasn't a very attractive place, but it was private. We spent the first day cleaning from ceiling to floor so that Jan could crawl on the floor. The play-pen that Martha's son had outgrown and given to us was too restrictive for Jan, who wanted to move. More than ever did we appreciate being by ourselves. All through these distracting times, we had still managed to keep up with the baby's schedule and saw the doctor regularly, and Jan was in perfect health. It pleased me that he didn't have to suffer for our follies.

In this godforsaken place I met a lifelong friend, Merry. She had one about the same age as Jan and a six-year-old husband was in construction and they lived on their own from us. We saw each other every day, and life was bearable. Merry was a beautiful woman. She took pleasure in her children and seemed always to have good spirits. She had been brought up a Jehovah's Witness, but was no longer active, however, the rest of her family consisted of one brother and numerous sisters, of whom she had three. She talked about them and Montana, where they lived and she grew up, constantly.

Merry had had a few knocks in life. As young as she was, she had already been married before, but her husband had died in a terrible accident only a year after they were married. She met another man, half Indian, to whom she was presently married, and who was the father of her children. Phil was a quiet man. He hardly ever talked nor smiled, but he was friendly toward us, and sometimes helpful. However, there was an absence of the bond we felt between Merry and us. As different as Merry and we were, we had the same set of values.

One day Kris came home in a car he had bought from someone at work. A prouder man you had never seen. He had managed to get his license long before he had a car, and it came in handy. At first it made me furious that he hadn't talked it over with me before he bought the car. I was concerned about how to pay for it. He assured me that it only cost \$200 and he could pay the guy at work every week until it was paid off. He was tired of waiting for the bus all the time. We managed, but I don't remember how. Somewhere in there we got help from Jewish Welfare for a few months, but we were ashamed of taking it and never mentioned it to anyone.

It was a new life for us to have a car. Gas cost under 20 cents per gallon, so it was affordable to drive. Brocken was, of course, always with us. We were able to get up to Hollywood where I used my press card to meet stars I wanted to interview. I

got pictures from the new releases to send with my articles to Norway and tickets to see any new movies getting their first run in the studios. Kris went to Pasadena Playhouse where he got free access to observe the productions, as well as tickets to the plays. The doors were open for us everywhere.

Life went on in a "normal" fashion for a little while. Kris went to work early every day. I spent my time taking care of the baby and keeping the house clean, and had dinner ready for my husband when he came back from work. Every weekend we took great pleasure in driving around Southern California to take in all the sights, when we were not in Hollywood to see some pictures or in Pasadena Playhouse to see a play. We finally started to enjoy our lives in America.

CHAPTER FIVE

Abel Abrahamson came into our lives through Brocken, who knew his brother David from their student days. Abel wanted to study film at UCLA, and he seemed to know everything of importance that happened in Hollywood. When he heard that I had a press card, he urged me to join the Foreign Correspondent Club, which had weekly lunches with famous stars, directors and producers. Sometimes the FCC also gave dinners for the stars, and it was a good place to make contacts. After I joined we went to several lunches and dinners with him and met many of the stars, and had pictures taken with some of them. I got contacts for interviews that way and sent back "News from Hollywood" with pictures from the newly released movies. If the Norwegian government had allowed transfers of money at that time, we would have been in a much better situation than we were.

One day Abel came with exciting news. He could get us tickets to the Oscar Awards Ceremony. Somebody he knew had tickets he couldn't use. If we were short of cash, he would advance us the money, but we had to make up our minds right away. Brocken urged us to take advantage of this opportunity which we might never again have. He promised to babysit while we were away. We didn't know much about the Oscar Awards, but we soon found out.

When I told Merry we were going to the Oscars, she became very excited about what I would wear and how I would fix my hair. I had brought with me one long dress from the time we had money in Sweden, and I had my fur coat. I asked her if I could use fur in this warm climate and she laughed and told me that fur was the one thing everybody in Hollywood wore.

Kris and I hadn't been out alone together since Jan was born, although Brocken had offered to babysit several times. But we had been reluctant to let him, because he seemed too awkward to take care of a baby. This time however, we took him up on his words. To feel more secure I asked Merry to look in on them while we were away, and she promised to do so. It was exciting for both of us to dress up to go out alone together. Kris looked handsome in formal dress, and my gown was pretty, but very tight. I had definitely put on weight while I was pregnant and had not lost it again. Kris had a hard time closing the zipper, but succeeded when I held my breath. With the fur over my shoulders to protect me should the seams split, I was ready to go. I had promised Merry I would show her what we looked like before we left and went over to her place.

"Oh, you are not ready yet," Merry said when she saw me. She admired the dress and said I looked O.K. "But you still have to apply makeup," she said, "and it is late. You will have to hurry."

"I am ready to go now," I answered.

"But you haven't put on any makeup yet."

"I don't use makeup, Merry. I don't even have any."

"You can't go to the Oscar's without makeup, I will loan you some."

I laughed at her and assured her that I would be all right. Merry was aghast at the thought of me going to the Oscar Award Ceremony all dressed up with no make-up. She was so concerned that she talked about it for days. In fact she never forgot it. Almost fifty years later when I talked to her long distance, she asked me if I remembered that day.

It was an exciting evening. People were lined up in the streets to look at the stars, and they were poking their heads into our car and asking each other who we were. The thing I remember most vividly was when the attendant who called out the names of the incoming guests also announced the make of the car they were driving, Lincoln, Cadillac, Rolls Royce, etc. When we were helped out of the car, he neglected to notice our names, nor did he announce the 1932 Hudson we were driving. He knew, of course, that we were of no interest to the crowd. For one fleeting moment I thought the parking attendant couldn't get the car started again, and the mere thought made me almost faint.

This was 1947 and the award for the best picture was "Gentlemen's Agreement," with Gregory Peck, whom I had sat

opposite at one of the Foreign Correspondents dinners. He had been there with his wife, a blond insignificant woman to whom he had been very attentive. I heard later that they had divorced, which made me realize how precarious the Hollywood relationships were.

I had seen "Gentlemen's Agreement," which dealt with the discrimination against Jews, shortly before the Award Ceremony took place, and the movie had made me both happy and sad. Happy because it spoke directly to my heart when discrimination was condemned, and sad because it was necessary to show such a movie in America, the land of the free.

At the Award Ceremony it was exciting to see the beautiful dresses and jewelry, kissing of the cheeks which mostly landed in the air, and the exclamation of "Darling" for every other word that was uttered. I don't remember much of the Ceremony itself, not even who was the main host, except that it was long and tedious, and that every time the public laughed we wondered why, because we didn't understand much of what was going on. After the show was over and we looked for our car in the parking lot, we found it far back in a corner, as if the parking attendant had been ashamed to park it. We saw several stars in the parking lot, and one I remember was Dinah Shore. She looked so tiny and vulnerable that time. I followed her with special interest up through the years.

Buttedal also came into our lives at that time. He was a Norwegian actor who lived in San Diego but visited Los Angeles regularly. He stayed at the same hotel as Brocken whenever he came, and Brocken had told him about Kris. Buttedal was eager to meet him to hear news of his actor friends in Norway. We invited him over, and he and Kris talked theater nonstop all evening. There wasn't an actor or director in Norway they hadn't heard of or met. Buttedal was much older than we were. He was a loner who never married and had no close family in America. He had some family members still alive in Norway, but had no contact with them. Kris seemed to remember that Buttedal had emigrated to America because it had become known that he was gay. Whenever he was in Los Angeles, we invited him over, and he started to treat us as family. He turned out to be a very good friend.

One weekend we had planned a trip to Mount Wilson to look at the observatory. It was much colder up there than we had expected, and I think that's where Jan got pneumonia. At first we thought he had a cold. I watched him closely that night. His nose seemed to be so stuffed that he had trouble breathing. In the morning I called the doctor, who told me to make a tent out of a sheet and put it over boiling water so that the damp would make it easier for the baby to breathe. I did as I was told and waited eagerly for Kris to come home from work that night. When he finally came he was so depressed he could hardly express what

he had to say: he had lost his job. His boss had said it was too much talk around there about him being a foreigner, so he didn't dare to keep him any longer. It was bad news, but the baby was more important at the moment, and he didn't seem to get any better. Kris called the doctor again, who said we should watch him during the night, and if he wasn't better in the morning we should bring him to the hospital.

I sat with the baby on my lap through the night under the tent so that he could breathe, and I got more scared by the minute. Kris wanted to relieve me, but I wouldn't let go. As soon as it was light we took the baby to the hospital. Kris carried him, and I asked at the desk for our doctor. The receptionist asked me for insurance, and when I told her we didn't have any she wanted money. Kris didn't answer but just walked through the double doors into the hospital and asked for the doctor, while the girl was screaming: "You can't go in there, you can't go in there." I answered: "We have a sick baby, we'll talk about money later," and followed Kris.

When we saw the doctor he asked what all the commotion was about, and I told him it was about money. He said: "I'm not worried." I drew a deep breath and the pain in my gut eased up a bit by the doctor's demeanor. He was very calm and smilingly assured us that he would take care of the baby. With the new

drug penicillin there was nothing to worry about, because we had a healthy baby.

I wanted to stay with my child, but the doctor explained that it would be best for the baby if he didn't see me around. He would be too upset every time I had to leave, and that would prolong the sickness. I could see him every day but stay behind a screen so that he couldn't see me. It was extremely difficult for me to leave him in the hospital, but I trusted the doctor completely and was confident that he would make my baby well.

The next thing we had to do was to find out how much the hospital would cost, and then raise the money to pay for it. It didn't take us long to decide that we had to ask Buttedal for a loan. We called him and he agreed to loan us the money, but we had to come and get it. As I mentioned before, he lived in San Diego. This was before the Freeway System was built, and it took us a good three hours from Los Angeles to reach our destination. Brocken came with us as he always did. I sat in the back and cried the whole way.

We didn't stay long, we had to get back to the hospital. We thanked our friend profoundly and were soon on our way back to Los Angeles. I felt better on the way back because we were going directly to the hospital to see the baby. When we finally got there I ran inside and stood behind the screen to look at him.

It took all the self control I contained to keep me from taking him into my arms. But I saw that he was already much better. He was breathing easier and didn't look sick. That calmed me down. After several days just looking at him behind a screen, I did come home with a healthy baby.

Brocken's friend, Janson, became the new pastor of the Norwegian Seaman Church in San Diego. He was the same person to whom Brocken had given his grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. The pastor was very concerned that Jan had not been baptized and tried to convince us to change our minds by telling us that the baby would never go to heaven without baptism. He turned a deaf ear when I said that Jews don't baptize their babies. He tried to persuade Kris, but Kris laughed at him.

Janson and Brocken had graduated from divinity school together, but had obviously gone in different directions. They still remained friends, and when Brocken told him about our plight, Janson wanted to help. We had come to his assistance in Sweden when he needed help and we had money, and he was glad to have an opportunity to reciprocate. I was happy he felt that way although we were not heaven bound. He asked a person in his congregation, who belonged to the Norwegian Society, if she had any kind of a job that Kris could do. She didn't, but she talked to Judith and Einar Jall, who also belonged to the Norwegian

Society since Judith was Norwegian. They decided that it wouldn't hurt to have their kitchen painted.

As Judith tells it: "As soon as he started to talk I found him fascinating, and when my neighbor, Alice came over. she thought the same, so we stood there watching him work and listening to him talk. The painting took a little longer than expected, but we didn't mind, we thought he was so interesting that we forgot everything else we had to do. One day we were ready to go downtown and had dressed up in high heels, but we couldn't tear ourselves away, and there we stood first on one foot and then on the other just to be there with him to hear what he had to say. And we talked and we laughed. We hadn't had such fun in years."

"We wanted to meet the rest of the family, and one day he came with you and the baby. You were gorgeous in a white coat and long black hair, and the baby was the cutest thing I had ever seen. As little as he was, he already was flirting with me."

It was nice to hear that she found me pretty, because I felt rather ugly right then. Then she went on to tell:

"One day I had to go for an errand and he was ready to paint the cabinets. I told him to use the under-coat first and enamel last, but when I came home, he had done the opposite and had to do the whole thing over again. I didn't mind at all, I

couldn't remember when I ever had laughed so much, and it gave Alice and me some extra time to listen to him."

Judith and I became good friends, and she was excited when I told her that I had opportunity to see all the new movies at the studios in Hollywood. She went with me often, and it was a good arrangement. She furnished the transportation and I had the tickets. Later on we met Einar, her Swedish husband, and we all became good friends and bridge partners. It was a nice period of time for us for a little while.

CHAPTER SIX

Merry had finally found an apartment to rent in a nearby apartment complex and told me I should put my name on the list so that we too would be eligible. We did, but when we read the contract, we declined the honor of living there. You had to be Caucasian to be eligible. Although Caucasian was an inaccurate name to use, we knew it meant no Negroes, Mexicans, or Jews, and we didn't want to live in a place where not everyone was welcome. It was sad to turn down a brand new apartment surrounded with green lawns, an ideal place for children to play; but to live there would mean that we concurred with the regulations, and we wanted no part of them. One of the reasons we had gone to America was to escape prejudice, and it was shocking and disappointing for us to see how widespread it was.

When I told Merry she was moving into a place with restrictions against other people, she was not surprised.

"Phil is not Caucasian," she said, "he is Indian and if they knew, they wouldn't let us in either, but I am not going to tell them. I can't live in this hole any longer. We have stayed in this place almost two years, and we need a place where the children can play. I am going to rent it, I am not going to let some stupid rules stop me. Those rules are everywhere anyway, you can't escape them."

I told her why we wouldn't apply, and she understood.

"You can come and visit, and the kids can play together. We will see each other often. It can't be against your principles to visit. If it were, you couldn't go anywhere, because you can't escape those rules. They are all around you - if you don't live in the slums, that is."

After she moved, we did visit often. I had lunch with her several times, and she introduced me to tuna fish casserole, and tuna fish sandwiches.

That whole spring we had been busy writing letters and filling out forms to prolong our stay in America, and we had gotten an extension to September 1947. We had also finally found a sponsor. His name was Olav Halvorsen, a quiet Norwegian teacher who, because of his health, had emigrated to California with his wife before World War I, so that they could live in a warmer climate. All they wanted was a little plot where Mrs. Halvorsen could grow a vegetable garden and some pretty flowers, and they found a place in Los Angeles that they could afford.

Mrs. Halvorsen planted flowers and vegetables, but they didn't grow. She dug deep and turned the dirt and planted over and over again. Nothing would grow for her. She couldn't understand why, because she had been very successful with everything she had planted in Norway. Disappointed as she was, she didn't give up, but tried again and again, again and again.

Nothing happened. Their friends advised them to find another place to live, but they had no money for that. They must try to make it where they had bought the plot.

In short, the plot they had bought was in Signal Hills, and the only thing that grew there was oil. One day they had very modest means, and the next they were multimillionaires. Now they lived in Huntington Beach in a beautiful house, but the money apparently hadn't changed them. They were nice, quiet people, and Mr. Halvorsen was happiest when he could sit in his library and work. When he showed us his house, it was the books he owned that made his eyes shine.

Mrs. Halvorsen never understood how rich they were. She liked to do her own shopping at the vegetable market so that she could be assured of getting the freshest wares, and she brought her money in a little coin purse tucked down the front of her dress, just as she was used to back home. My fondest memory from the visits to the Halvorsens was the flower Mrs. Halvorsen gave me every time we were ready to leave for home. She would go in her garden and find the prettiest flower there, and proudly present it to me. She was so sweet and pure, my eyes get wet every time I think about her.

To be a sponsor for immigrants at that time was no light matter. It meant to take full responsibility for the people they

sponsored in case they couldn't find a job because of illness or laziness. No entitlements for non-immigrants existed. Mr. Halvorsen sponsored us, although he knew our precarious situation. In return we assured him that he would never have to worry about us, we would take care of ourselves, and to this day I am proud to say that we never asked him for monetary help, in spite of the fact that he told us to let him know if we needed any.

The next time Buttedal came over, he offered us a plan: He would be 65 years old soon, and there was some pension he couldn't get if he owned more than a certain amount of money. He had saved up a few dollars, and wanted to put it into a house, but he couldn't own the house himself, the house would be in our name. In reality the house would belong to him, but we would live there and our rent would be to pay the mortgage and upkeep. If we did that the arrangement would work for both of us, we would get a place to live, and he wouldn't have to give up his life's savings to receive his pension, and he also would have a place to stay when he came for a visit to Los Angeles. It sounded like manna from heaven to us, and we agreed to everything. Brocken warned us that we might be stuck with having Buttedal move in with us, but Buttedal had assured us that he would come no more often than he had in the past.

It didn't take long before we found a house in a fairly new sub-division in Wilmington. It had three bedrooms, a bath and a kitchen, and a fireplace in the living room. One bedroom had its own entrance, which suited our needs exactly. We were happy to escape the dreary motel and its surroundings, and were eagerly looking forward to move into our own home. The mortgage was \$50.30 per month, including taxes and insurance. We had been in America only one year and we already had a house of our own. Only in America could a thing like that happen.

But moving into the house turned out to be more difficult than anticipated. The day before we were moving, we went over to the house to clean it up, so that all we had to do was to move in. The people from whom we had bought the house were supposedly already gone when we arrived. To our big surprise they hadn't even started to pack. Their excuse was that they couldn't get into their other house before another month and didn't want to move twice. We told them that we had no other place to live, we needed the house, we had already given up our apartment at the motel, they had to move. They suggested that we move in with them and we all live there until they could get into their new home. It seemed that they had planned to live there all the time, they just hadn't told us. That made us all furious, even Brocken, who always had a soft spot for people who needed help.

Kris told them that they better to be out of the house by 12 noon the next day or he would get the sheriff to throw them out. The mere idea that they had planned to stay all along without telling us made us so incensed that we were determined to hold out for our rights. Had they told us ahead of time that they needed to stay longer in the house, we would have worked out a solution because we are reasonable people, but their outrageous behavior reminded us of our war years where we had had no rights. We told them to go and live with their family instead of infringing upon strangers. We knew they had close family who lived nearby, her mother had been present when we first came to look at the house. After a few telephone calls they told us they would be out of the house the next day. They probably thought that we didn't know what was going on because we talked with a strong accent.

When we went over there the next day, they had left, and they had also left a big mess. The fireplace was full of garbage, and paper and boxes were spread all around. I was glad they hadn't done more damage than leaving a dirty house. We cleaned up the place and were ready to move in a couple of days later.

To furnish the place took a little ingenuity. Martha knew somebody who was buying a new bedroom set and wanted to sell their old one. We bought that for very little money. At the

second hand shop Buttedal found an old couch badly in need of new cushions. He brought it with some old army blankets, and together we made new covers for the cushions. It wasn't elegant, but it was clean and usable. We took some wooden boxes and red bricks and made a usable book-case and coffee-table. An old card-table with a piece of pretty cloth-covering made a kitchen table. We had plenty of pictures on the wall. Buttedal had several oils and prints that he loaned us, Brocken had one, and Judith loaned us several of her paintings. She was an amateur artist and had a room full of paintings to choose from. It's amazing how much nice pictures add to a sparsely furnished room. I thought our front room looked far more inviting than that of the former inhabitants. The only thing we desperately needed was an ice-box, and we found one in the second-hand store for very little money. The ice-man came by every day with new ice.

We had no washer, and no money to have diaper service any more, so we had to wash diapers by hand. After they were rinsed out thoroughly we boiled them with a little ammonia, and then washed them again. It wasn't a job I enjoyed, but I had learned to do any task to the best of my ability whether I liked it or not, a message whose validity I never have questioned ever up to today.

We desperately needed money for food, and there was no money coming in from anywhere. Bread and milk were delivered to the house, and the bill would come at the end of the month. All we had between us was \$4.00, and that would be enough to buy food for the baby for one week, and nothing for us but bread and milk and oatmeal. Brocken charged some loaves of bread from our bread delivery man to take with him to his room at night. We did not want to ask anybody for money. We were too proud, something would come up.

We had spent a lot of time talking about inventions and opportunities, and discussing how other people had made fortunes on this and that. We wondered what possibilities there were to find out what other countries needed that was plentiful in America. Brocken brought books back from the library, and we read and researched whenever we had spare time. We also wrote letters home and asked what was sparse in Norway after the war. We had heard that the glass factories were in trouble because they didn't have all the ingredients needed for making glass. I invented an onion cutter. Brocken found out that with no money to take out a patent, we could put the invention in an envelope addressed to ourselves and send it by registered mail. As long as we kept the letter unopened, it was as good as any patent.

At that time we had mail deliveries twice a day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. We were eagerly waiting for the postman to come every day. He always brought some letters, because Brocken used our address for his mail too, and we had all sent numerous letters of inquiry all over the world. And we had started to send letters home again, now that we had something nice to talk about. Pictures and notes from the studios came almost daily, and I had a stack of unused pictures saved, some of which I still possess. Food for the baby came first for us, but money for stamps came in a good second. Without stamps we would have felt bottled up. Contact with the outside world was as vital as breathing.

One day Brocken came with a strange letter. It was addressed to Kris, but had his address crossed out and Brocken's name and address at Don Hotel, Wilmington, written in. The envelope was stamped San Ysidro Mar 26, 1947. There was no return address on the envelope. Inside was a typewritten note:

Please note the following name and address:

Mr. Frantisek P. Louda
159 South Western Avenue
Los Angeles 4, California

Mr. Louda is a Czechoslovak and is a member of the "Soko'l". He is an architect and builder.

We immediately wrote a letter to Mr. Louda who gave us the name of Mr. and Mrs. Calhoun. Mr. Calhoun was a retired lawyer who had worked on immigration cases, and Mrs. Calhoun was retired from the Los Angeles Immigration Service. They were both helping immigrants with their immigration papers free of charge. We contacted them immediately, and I can truly say that without them our lives would have turned out quite differently, because we would never have been able to stay in these United States.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The next job Kris landed was selling clothes on Norwegian ships that docked in San Pedro. He was happy doing that. It gave him a chance to talk to the seamen, and they were glad to have a Norwegian-speaking salesman. He didn't have to sell. They bought what they needed, and were eager to use money, especially if they had been out to sea a long time. Unfortunately there were not enough Norwegian merchant ships stopping in San Pedro for Kris to make a decent living.

Every time one came in, he brought home souvenirs from all over the world, a chest from China, ebony figures from India, teakwood elephants from Africa, a gold ring from Palestine, and numerous other knick-knacks. I waited eagerly for his return on those days, for he always came home with surprises. Sometimes he brought foods that otherwise would have been dumped. Food that had been cooked the day before could not be used over, and a lot of perfectly good food was thrown out every day. Once Kris rescued a whole turkey from being thrown to the fish. The turkey hadn't even been touched. We still had the war years in mind when food had been scarce, and he expressed amazement over such waste. The chef let him pick out what he wanted before he dumped it. The turkey fed us for a whole week.

I went with Kris one day, and the captain showed me around the ship. I enjoyed talking Norwegian with somebody other than Kris and Brocken. I also made friends with some of the crew. The ship was going to stay in dock for repairs a couple of weeks, and all food and opened bottles of liquor had to be disposed of. I was loaded with all kinds of stuff when we stepped off the boat, and one seaman who was going home with us stuck a bottle of liquor under my arm.

"Put it inside your coat," he said. "It is against the law to bring opened bottles of liquor from the ship. They will frisk me, but not you."

It all happened so fast I didn't have time to protest, and scared out of my wits I went through the customs. I was lucky, but learned fast that it could be dangerous to be caught off guard like that. The irony was that I don't care for the taste of liquor and here I was smuggling it, a feat that could have cost us our immigration. After it was all over, it was easy to laugh.

Kris kept that job off and on for a while. Then Einar told him about a job on a fishing supply boat that he could have.

"It's like a vacation, " Einar said. "In between picking up fish you just sit around and look at the water go by. But you will be away days at a time. It pays good, though, \$75 a week plus food, pretty good pay."

Kris took the job, of course, and it lasted a couple of weeks. The first time he went out was O.K., and he came home with a large fish. The second time around he told the following story:

"Vacation indeed. The first two days were pleasant, but one early morning the fishing fleet came and we were surrounded by hundreds of fishing boats. I have never seen so many boats and so much fish in my life. My job was to get down into one of the boats and throw the fish onto the supply boat to be weighed. The fish were big and after hours of throwing fish my arms and wrists were aching. One big fish slipped out of my hands, and I thought the fisherman was going to kill me, he was so mad. Fortunately the supply boat paid him for the fish, and I got out of there as fast as I could."

"Then the big Italian tuna-boat came in, and the fish were everywhere. They came in such large quantities that we couldn't ice them fast enough, and after a while we gave up icing all together and just threw the fish down. Tuna were everywhere. We stepped over them and stumbled over them, I have never seen anything like it in my life. On the way back to the cannery we even slept with them."

"Fortunately for me the School of Fish went North, and if I had stayed on it would have meant at least two weeks away at the time, and I said thank you, but no thanks."

We kept our heads above water by odd jobs Kris did for anybody who needed them. The documents we filled out to be allowed to stay in America seemed to be never-ending. Our contacts and correspondence with the Calhouns were frequent. We had sent our papers to Mexico and were waiting to be included in a quota. The reason we sent the papers through Tijuana was simply because we had to leave the United States to sign our papers, and Tijuana was closer than Norway. When the time came for us to sign the papers, it would be safer to leave Jan in America since he was an American citizen. Should something go wrong we would at least be able to get back into the country to pick him up. But it was a frightening thought to have to leave him behind.

Brocken had been in contact with the studios and had done some research work for them, but lately he had been completely out of cash and unable pay his hotel-room. For some time now he had been staying with us in the room that had its own outside door, Buttedal's room. It was neither a good situation for him nor for us. Brocken had constantly preached that friends should never live together, neither would have the freedom so necessary for a personal productive life. He also hated to be dependent

upon anybody, and we on the other hand had no time to enjoy each other as a family. But we all knew this was only a transition period and did the best we could not to be in each other's way,

The tide changed a bit. After a meeting Brocken had had with the head at one studio, he very excitedly came back and told us that now we had our chance to make it big. The studio wanted to make a movie out of the destruction of the Rjukan Heavy Water Plant in Norway and needed someone to translate the story to English. They hired Brocken, gave him \$500 in advance, loaned him a decent typewriter and the use of a secretary in the studio and put him to work. Brocken sent Kris up there to ask for the job as technical advisor, and he was promised the job as soon as they started filming. Our optimism came back and our dreams were flying high.

That changed fast. A letter came to Brocken with information that France had thought of doing the same film, and if they did, the studio would have to scrap the project for the time being.

"That's our luck," Kris sighed. "It was too good to be true as usual."

"But France might not make the film," Brocken argued, "and we are still on. They have not fired me yet."

"They will," Kris predicted, and unfortunately he was right. The studio paid Brocken another \$500 for broken promises, and at least for a little while we had some money.

Then a letter came from one of Norway's glass manufacturers asking if we could find a supplier for calcinated soda, which was non-existent in Norway for the time being and was needed to make glass. We immediately wrote letters to the industries we had researched before and finally found one factory who had enough of the substance to supply us. We had to either apply for an export-import license in a hurry, or find somebody who already had one. With all our multiple talents put together, none of us had a head for business, and we thought the middle of a business opportunity was no time to learn all the rules and regulations or send to Washington for a license. We decided to ask Abel for help. He immediately contacted one of his brothers in the East, and the deal was on. One of the few things we regret we didn't do was to try harder to do it ourselves, especially since we had such luck with our first experiment.

In the meantime we needed to celebrate Brocken's 500 dollars with a dinner at a nice hotel and a decent dress and shoes for me. The only light dress I had was a red-checkered cotton that I had bought right after Jan was born, and my only comfortable pair of shoes were sandals. We went shopping in Long Beach in a district that had quite a selection of small expensive boutiques. I stopped in front of a shoe store and fell in love with a pair of shoes in the window. The guys pushed me to go in and ask for the price. and I did:

"How much are those shoes in the window?"

The salesman took one look at my dress and sandals and said overbearingly:

"They are snakeskin and quite expensive. But we have some here that I think will be more in your taste."

"How much are they?" I asked haughtily and added, "I would like to try them on."

"They are the most expensive shoes in the store. They are genuine snake-skin and will last you a lifetime."

"How much," I asked stubbornly.

"\$49.95," was the answer.

I almost fell over but insisted I wanted to try them on, and then didn't want to take them off my feet.

"They are the best pair of shoes I have tried on in my life, but they are terribly expensive," I said to my escorts. They conferred with each others and then insisted that I buy the shoes.

When the salesman saw that he had a sale on his hands, he didn't miss a beat. He immediately showed us a matching purse, also in snake skin and truly beautiful, and asked if I wouldn't like to have that too. I again asked for the price. The tone was quite another than it had been the first time i asked and in his most conciliatory voice he told me that it cost \$50.00, which of course was a lot of money, but I would have the purse the rest of my life.

"Snakeskin never wears out," he assured me.

He was lying, of course, snakeskin may be beautiful, but it doesn't last at all. The snakeskin used in those shoes was soft, like slippers. Brocken and Kris insisted that I buy the purse too. I don't know what made me buy those shoes and purse, because I hated the manners of the salesman. He had tried to make me feel inferior, and I suppose I wanted to tell him not to discount any customer. It was an expensive lesson to teach because back on the street again we were 100 dollars shorter than when we went in, almost two months' mortgage payments.

I still needed a new dress to go with the shoes, and we found one suitable just a fraction of what the shoes and purse had cost. Feeling great because we had been able to buy expensive, and hungry because we hadn't eaten all day we went to a nice hotel and had a good dinner. When we got back to Merry's to pick up Jan, I was excited and happy. It is strange how new clothes can restore one's self image. Merry enjoyed the story about the shoes as much as I did.

Abel had good news from his brother. He would take care of the export business, and when the sale was over and the commission paid, we would split the money four ways, Albert, Kris, Abel and his brother, and I. The commission would be sizable. But it would take some time and a good deal of correspondence to fulfill the deal.

During this time Kris had occasionally recited poetry in different clubs and churches with great success. He was contacted by the local theater group and asked to join. In the beginning he wasn't even willing to consider joining an amateur group, but after we had seen one of the plays, he decided he could do them a lot of good and agreed to direct a play for them. At the moment the players were rehearsing "Philadelphia Story," and they needed a body for the butler's part, a role with no lines. Kris agreed to help them out as a butler.

He enjoyed being back in the theater atmosphere, even if it was only an amateur group, but he came home complaining about things the director didn't know, or things the players did wrong. When I asked him about his part, he just shrugged his shoulders.

"That's nothing. There is no speaking part, I just play the butler."

I didn't plan to go and see the play, but the day after the premiere, I had a call from Judith who insisted that I go and see it.

"You won't be sorry," she assured me. "You have to see it, you have to see Kris doing the butler's role."

I told Merry, and we decided to go together. I let Brocken babysit. Jan was much bigger and not fragile anymore. After I put him to bed, I felt secure in letting Brocken watch him.

Although it wasn't a great performance, the play went smoothly, and got a few laughs. The audience was appreciative. Then the butler came in. At first I didn't recognize Kris, his costume was elegant, his nose was larger, his expression noncommittal and his face set in stone. As he walked around the room fixing this, correcting that, as butlers do, just slightly exaggerated to show that the play was indeed a satire on high society, I felt a chuckle starting and when I met Merry's eyes, we both broke into helpless laughter. The audience had been snickering all along, but suddenly they burst out laughing and didn't stop. The butler with his superior aura kept on doing his duties, but the arrogance and servitude of a perfect butler was so superbly portrayed that the audience became uncontrollable. When the butler left the room, they broke into applause.

I had seen Kris act and heard him recite, but I had no idea he was a comic player, and I was surprised. When the play was over, we went back stage to compliment him, but he hurriedly sent us home and said he would explain later. Merry and I laughed all the way home and I laugh now when I am writing this.

Apparently it was no laughing matter. When Kris came home, he said that he was asked by the director to play the butler straight because he was stealing scenes from the others.

"What are you going to do?" I asked. "People will come tomorrow and they will expect to see you do that role. You can't change it now."

"I won't change. I told them that either I play the role the way it is supposed to be played, or I don't do it. I don't steal scenes from anybody, because I am the only one on the stage. If they can't live up to their roles, that is the director's fault, not mine. I could do wonders with that play, but it is too late now. They will see what I can do in the next play which I am going to direct."

It almost didn't become a next play, at least for Kris. Some of the players and the director wanted Kris out. The others were thrilled that they had finally gotten somebody with theater experience to direct them. The players took a vote on his directing the next play, and Kris won. But the fun had gone out of it for him. He directed the next play, which was a hit, but after that was over he said his goodbyes. He wanted no more conflicts. Through one of his followers he got a job to direct a play for Chadwick High School in Pasadena, a high school where several of the stars sent their children, and for which he was paid handsomely. That play was also a success, but nothing seemed to lead anywhere.

CHAPTER EIGHT

"I am sick of being poor and having all these difficulties," I said to Brocken during one of our discussions. "We came with totally unrealistic plans to make a better society, with impossible goals. Look at us now. We have been here almost one and a half years and what have we accomplished? Other people stronger than I can take up the fight for the indecencies in the society. I am obviously not of the sacrificing type. I want a peaceful home for my child, and a decent job for Kris. I want to publish my book and then write another one. That's all I am asking. I don't have strength for anything else. I am at the point where I honestly don't know why we came here. If we had a place to live in Norway, we would go back."

"Sad that you have already forgotten why we came," Brocken said. "We wanted to do something individually, make a personal stake. What about our plans and promises for the future? We knew we would have difficulties, but we were willing to take that struggle."

"I haven't forgotten why we came. But it is impossible to do anything without money. We don't have a sellable plan. In fact, I don't even know what our plan is any more. All this high-falutin stuff about personal freedom is just rhetoric. There is no freedom if you have no money."

"I agree with Elsa," Kris tuned in. "It is easy to sit on a sunfilled deck with full stomachs and adventure in our blood dreaming about distant goals. It is harder when your stomach is empty, and you don't know where your next meal is coming from. It was insane of us to go to a strange country where we didn't know anybody, and didn't even have the right to work. And Elsa with a baby in her stomach. I hate it here. I wouldn't mind going back right now to a more civilized society. Here you think about yourself and nobody else. If we had a place to live, we would go back right now."

Luckily for us all the deal with Abel's brother came to a close, and soon we had money in our hands again. The first thing Kris and I did was to buy a washer/dryer combination. I was thrilled to give up diaper-washing. Then we got a second-hand refrigerator, and I was no less thrilled to give up the iceman. I wish we had kept the icebox though. Such things have since become rare and quite valuable. Ours was made of heavy oak and could have been made beautiful, but we wanted new and modern things then.

We bought a new car. Right after we arrived in California, there were no new cars for anybody whether you had money or not. Just to prove a point Brocken wrote to the head of Ford Corporation and told them about us and that we needed a car. We hadn't expected an answer, but nevertheless got one from the

president for the company stating that a car would be available for us at the local Ford Dealer. At that time we had no money to buy a car, but we thought it embarrassing not to take the generous offer, so we gave away the opportunity to get a new car to one of the people in the Norwegian Club. They were thrilled to get a new car, and gave us \$25 dollars for the tip.

Now when we had money for a down payment on a new car, we couldn't get the one we wanted and had to settle for a Kaiser. We didn't mind. Just to have a new car was thrilling. There wasn't much left of our money, and we needed to save what we had for the expected trip to Tijuana to get our papers. The personal contact with the Calhouns had ceased since they moved to San Francisco, but we corresponded at least once a week. We felt safe as long as we had them in our lives. We knew they wouldn't let us down.

Letters from the Department of Justice in Washington came to each of us with the following message: WARRANT FOR ARREST OF ALIENS, because we, after admission as visitors, had remained in the United States for a longer time than permitted. However, we were released on own recognizance until further proceedings. When we asked Mr. Calhoun what these warrants meant he assured us that they were just form letters, and they didn't ruin our

chances for permanent papers. They did give us an opportunity to work since we already were under warrant of arrest, and we could take any job we could find.

It sounded great, but to find a suitable job for Kris didn't come easy. The next job Einar sent him to was a ship fitting job, but to get it he had to join the union. Kris' first encounter with the American union was according to him no bed of roses:

"After I was admitted to the union, I asked innocently when do I start working? and the man almost bit my head off and screamed: "When I tell you to." He sent me to some ship fitting company, and I started to work there but didn't last long. I didn't even know the names of the tools, and when I was asked to get a tool for somebody, I either didn't understand what he was saying, or I didn't understand which tool he wanted. The first day we had a lunch break I saw two black men sitting by themselves, and I went over to them and asked if I could join them. They looked unsure and asked if I really wanted to sit with them, and I said yes. "But we are negroes," one of them said, and because I didn't know what to say, I answered, "Are you? I didn't notice." I sat down with them and the three days I was there I had lunch with them. After three days they fired me, and I don't blame them."

Poor Kris, he had a hard time adjusting. Manual labor was not for him, and he tried selling insurance. That meant he had to go to evening school and learn the insurance business, and he dutifully did what was expected of him. He started out by going from house to house collecting 25 cents for people who had already bought insurance. He came home telling me horror stories of how poor these people were and how most of them lived like pigs.

"Some of them were so poor that they couldn't find 25 cents in the house. That meant that their policy would lapse, and I felt so sorry for them that I paid the installment to keep the policy active."

Fortunately for him he didn't pass the insurance test at school and had to give up every ambition of ever being an insurance agent. He was so relieved by not having to sell insurance that he beamed when he came home telling me that he hadn't passed the test. He started to look in the papers for jobs, but nothing seemed to fit his temperament. I was concerned that maybe there was no place for Kris in America, and that he would be better off back home. But both of us knew that before we had a place to stay we couldn't go home.

I heard from one of the neighbors about childcare in California and was amazed at how far they had come. When I heard that childcare was possible I decided that I would get a job.

The house we lived in had no fence, and the only child in the neighborhood was a little girl across the street. When Jan was invited over there, I was relieved. Otherwise I had to sit outside on the doorsteps and watch him every moment. And he was a fast kid; I got a lot of exercise by running after him. It gave me no time for anything else, and Jan needed children to play with, so I inquired at the childcare center. Everything there had been built for little children. They got a snack in the morning, hot lunch, and a snack in the afternoon. They had beds where they could take a nap in the afternoon, a lot of toys to play with, books that were read to them, and two nice young people who were in charge. The only drawback was that the children needed to be two years old before they were admitted.

Then I looked for a job. It didn't take me long before I applied for a job advertised in the paper as an Eliot-Fischer operator, which was a job I had held in Norway right before my family was arrested. I went up to the manager and talked to him, and he seemed to be very interested and promised to let me know. A week went by, and I hadn't heard anything, and I went up there again. The manager greeted me with open arms and said:

"I am glad you were interested enough in the job to come back and inquire. If you hadn't done that you wouldn't have gotten the job. You can start tomorrow if you like."

The job was at the Long Beach Press Telegram which at least in the name was something I wanted to be associated with. When I took Jan to the nursery school, they agreed to take him although he wasn't two years old yet. He loved the school. There were so many kids to play with, and when we came to pick him up in the evenings, he was a happy little boy. It was easier for me to leave him in the mornings when he was so well adjusted during the days. The two nursery ladies loved him. They told me all kinds of cute things he had done during the day. And the price was right. I paid them five dollars per week to have him there. The schools were state supported I believe, and people paid what they could afford. Since I made 36 dollars per week, they thought five dollars was enough for me to pay. It still gave us enough money to pay the mortgage and eat, but the car payments had to come from another source, and Kris' odd jobs helped.

The day after I started to work at the Press Telegram, my boss took me around the whole building and introduced me to everybody and explained what each department was doing. I didn't understand much of what was going on, just smiled and said very little. I was glad to be back at my desk, because I knew the job. Eliot Fischer was just a bookkeeping machine, and all I had to do was to enter numbers and the name on the document. If we did no errors in a month, we would get an extra ten dollars. For each error a dollar was subtracted. The work was exceedingly boring, and sometimes when I let my mind wander, an error sneaked

in. I seldom got more than seven or eight dollars extra in a month, a few times I reached the no error stage and proudly brought home the ten dollars.

I had been introduced to the editor of the paper, and one day got enough courage to approach him and ask if I could do some articles for the paper. This was after a picture and a story about me had appeared in their Sunday paper. He asked me what I had in mind, and through my research person (Brocken) I had heard about Dr. Townsend and the article that Press-Telegram had published that had made him world known. I knew that Dr. Townsend was still alive and lived in Long Beach, and I thought it would be interesting to write a follow-up article about him.

The editor was interested and told me to go ahead and write the story, and they would decide then if it would be published or not. First I wrote a letter to Dr. Townsend where I included my questions, and asked if he would do me the honor of answering the questions in writing, and then give me an audience where I could meet him personally.

On September 30, 1933, the Long Beach Press-Telegram had published an article written by Dr. Francis E. Townsend who claimed that a pension of 200 dollars should be paid to all Americans 60 years or older, providing that the people who received the money used it within 30 days. In that way the money

would go back into the industry and the purchasing power of the people would be increased. When Dr. Townsend wrote that article he was unknown to the world. Shortly thereafter he was one of the most discussed persons of our times, and the "Townsend Movement" would be one of the important social reform plans throughout the world. All this started from the one article in the Press Telegram.

Dr. Townsend wrote me back immediately. He was extremely pleased and surprised that an immigrant from Norway would know about him. We set up a day for the interview. He was 82 years old when I met him, which in 1948 was considered very old. He didn't act old. His eyes were bright and intelligent and we had a nice conversation, as much as I was able to converse at that time. I understood most of what he said, but I still had a hard time expressing myself. He thought my approach to the interview was interesting and innovative; by having him write answers to my questions there couldn't be any misunderstandings of his words. I will mention a couple of questions and answers:

Q. Have you changed your opinion about the Townsend Plan in the last chaotic years?

A. Far from it. The world trend toward chaos is being intensified with every passing day, and unless we can provide a

simple remedy that will permit people to relax from the strain and uncertainty of life, we shall undoubtedly come face to face with Armageddon in the near future.

Q. Your opinion concerning the recent pension system in the USA?

A. It constitutes the greatest fraud ever perpetrated upon a people by their government. The Government is taxing practically everybody to secure money with which to pay benefits, and leaving millions with no consideration, with nothing. They have collected more than ten billion dollars in social security taxes, paying back two million to the needy and spending the balance in every conceivable way and placing IOU's in the Treasury to offset the borrowing from the insurance fund. These bonds will have to be sold to the great banks when the Government needs the money for social security purposes, thus doubling the taxation for the people for the one project. Our righteous Government sends the individual to prison for indulging in similar activity. The pension system now in vogue is not only a fraud. It is totally inadequate and ineptly administered. It embitters the people more than it helps them. It should be wiped out entirely and the sane pay-as-you-go system adopted in its place.

I didn't know enough about the social security or the social problems in America at that time to have formed an opinion, and I didn't understand everything he was saying, but it was a thrill to meet this extraordinary man who seemed to be just as awake to social questions as ever. And he certainly hadn't lost his spirit. It was truly a privilege to have met him.

I submitted several articles under my maiden name while I was working at Press-Telegram, but I don't know if any of them were ever used. I never had time to read the paper in those days.

CHAPTER NINE

The other girls in the office and I soon started talking, and it didn't take long before we were on good terms with each other. Whenever we had a minute off, we went into the ladies lounge and talked. I wanted to talk as much as possible to learn the language, and in the beginning they wanted to know about my experiences during the war. However, the English I heard was not always grammatically correct, and I found myself using the dictionary constantly, a habit I have to this day. The conversations were also lacking in substance. What they were talking about mostly was their sexual ploys with their husbands, a matter I considered to be private.

In the newsroom I became friendly with a middleaged journalist from one of the Southern states. She invited Kris and me for dinner one day, and we happily accepted. She lived with her brother in a large house in Los Angeles, which was beautifully decorated, almost formal. All I had read about the South, their hospitality and gracious way of living, seemed to be accentuated here. The dinner table was set with beautiful china and silver, and a domestic served the dinner. We had a lively conversation going about the recent war in Europe, about Hitler and Goering. The only thing that disturbed me throughout the dinner was the talk about Goebbel's diary that Kris constantly pronounced as Goebbel's diarrhea, an understandable mistake since

our baby had just been inflicted with that unfortunate ailment. The Southern charm showed to a profound extent here, when not even a flicker of a smile on either face exposed any amusement. They perfectly well understood what Kris meant and allowed a newcomer to the country an error in language without causing him embarrassment. While I was cringing inside every time he used the word, and he used it often, I admired our host and hostess for their perfect manners, and never forgot that little incident.

Since we now had a permanent place to live, we had asked Kris' Aunt Nanna to send us our furniture that was stored and packed to go. It was a day of great excitement when the ship docked with all our things. Kris borrowed a truck from somewhere, and went to pick up the goods. The house looked quite different with our furniture and books. Aunt Nanna had sent all her crystal and silver and a whole new set of dishes for 24 people. It was great for us who had nothing. Now we felt quite rich and settled.

The first chance we had to use the new china was when we got a surprise call from Sigrid Rothchild who was in Los Angeles with her family. We invited them to dinner, and we had a lovely evening together. I even remember the soup I served for dinner, taken directly from my mother's array of dishes served on special occasions, except that my mother had worked long hours to be able to serve tomato soup, and I just opened cans, doctored it up a

little, garnished it with hard boiled eggs and chives, and served. Everything seemed so easy over here. The chicken was bought all cut up, the ice cream came in cardboard boxes. When my mother had chicken, she had to pluck it first, when we had ice cream for dessert, we had to turn the handle of the maker for a long time before the content became creamy enough to serve.

Cultural differences between our old and new country showed up in many different ways. Wanting to become friends with some of the people I worked with, I invited two couples for Smorgasbord one evening at 7 o'clock. They seemed to know what Smorgasbord was and I worked several days beforehand to get everything ready and perfect. Nobody showed up before 7:30 and they had just come from their dinner table. I had no takers for my smorgasbord, so Kris and I ate leftovers for a whole week. I was crushed, but didn't show it, just chalked it up to one more experience.

By now we had a whole three-ring binder full of letters from the government and copies of letters to the government, to make our stay in America permanent. I can't remember all the different papers we had to take with us to Tijuana in the summer of 1948, I put them all in the large traveling purse I was carrying. We of course had to have papers to be able to enter Mexico, and before that we had to show that we had money enough not to be a burden to anyone. The hardest thing about going to

Mexico to get our first papers was to leave Jan behind. Merry took care of him, but what would happen if we couldn't get back? It was a frightening thought, but we knew no other way this could be achieved, and decided we had to take the chance.

Tijuana at that time was just a little village with dirt roads and some souvenir tables set up right behind the border. The town itself had very few stores, and we were early so we went around the stores to look at the few things on display. By the time we were ready to go to the American Consulate I discovered that my purse was missing. Not only did the purse contain all the money we owned in this world, but more significantly it had all our papers we needed to get back to the States. Mortified we traced all our steps back in the stores, remembering what everybody had told us:

"In Tijuana hold on to your purse."

"Nobody has stolen it," Kris said. "We would have noticed it. There hasn't been anyone around. It must be in one of the stores."

Kris was right. After identifying ourselves the lady behind the desk in the jewelry store produced the purse, and I was so relieved that I cried. We thanked her, gave her some money and were on our way. And that is all I remember about that trip. We had no trouble getting back into the States, and to hold Jan in my arms again made everything O.K. with the world.

Now we had our papers, we had a house, I had a job, Jan had nursery school, but Kris hadn't found his melody yet. Not that I was terribly enthused about the niche I had found, but at least it paid the house payments and put food on the table. We had more or less given up on Hollywood and Pasadena Playhouse. I had no more time to keep up with the Foreign Correspondents Club. The excitement had gone, and I didn't even bother to get a new card. Kris was sure that his accent kept him away from ever becoming an actor in his adopted country, so his melody had to come from another source.

But the sources seemed to have dried up. Fewer and fewer opportunities came forth. After our initial business experience with the calcinated soda, which turned out quite lucrative, the second time around we only got a minimal amount of money, and then nothing. We tried different other things, but didn't succeed. I got a letter from a company asking me to send them a prototype of the onion cutter. I didn't know how to go about getting one, and let that idea lapse. All of a sudden nothing succeeded. Brocken started to talk about going to another city which had a bigger library. Kris talked about going back home, although there still were no apartments or houses to get, and I slaved away at my bookkeeping machine and hated it.

At Christmastime the paper had a party. Everybody was drinking a lot. It seemed I was the only sober person there.

I went along with a bunch of people to take the elevator to another floor. There was no door in the elevator, and when I stepped out to get into the elevator it started upwards. Before I could draw my foot back, the elevator dropped down and my foot was caught in between the elevator and the floor. My first thought was:

"I am going to lose my foot. This is one of the accidents you read about."

From then on things went fast. The elevator started upwards, and I was carried away from there. The ambulance came and I was taken to the hospital. After the foot was X-rayed, the doctor told me that it was not broken, just badly bruised, and I had to stay off it for a while. It was bandaged up and I got crutches to help me stay off the foot. I was so relieved that I still had a foot and considered myself a lucky person. Somebody took me home and it felt good to have somebody to come home to.

Kris took me up to the paper the day after, and I told the boss what the doctor had said. He assured me that I could take all the time I needed, and the paper would pay all the expenses, my salary would be paid as long as I was off. I took that for granted, being used to those considerations from Norway. Then he started to drill me about who had been drinking, how much had been consumed and how the accident had happened. Then he asked:

"Did you talk to somebody else about this accident?"

"Just my family," I answered.

It was Brocken who told me that he was probably afraid that I would sue them, because I had the perfect opportunity to do so. Suing was so far from my mind, that I shrugged it off. I was just happy that my foot was going to be O.K. After fourteen days I was back at work and everybody was happy.

We got another visitor from Norway, Kris' cousin Nicken. He had docked in Wilmington for a couple of days and after he had visited us he wanted to sight-see and suggested the amusement park that some of his buddies had talked about. I had never been to such a place before but had heard a lot about it. We complied with his wishes and I went with him on different rides while Kris took care of the baby. Then Nicken wanted to go on the Big Dipper, but didn't want to go alone. Kris absolutely refused, but he talked me into it. I remember being so scared that I braced my legs against the bar and laughed hysterically from the time we started to dip until we were down on the ground again. My legs were black and blue for a month afterwards, and I never again rode on the Big Dipper. I have taken my son and grandson to amusement parks, but I have never found them amusing.

We had been in America almost three years now and Kris still had not found a suitable job. We lived with the unsettling feeling of not knowing what to expect. We used to think that maybe something would turn up around the next corner, but it never did. Brocken had gone to San Francisco, because they had

better libraries there he told us. But I never was sure that he told us the whole truth about why he was leaving. It was the first time we had been away from each other for any length of time for six years. We kept up our correspondence at least once a week. We no longer had any contact with Martha. We saw Merry and her family regularly, and we started to play bridge with Judith and Einar. But no opportunities seemed to come our way.

Every day Kris scanned the papers for a job until one day he saw an advertisement for a violin teacher for National Institute for Music and Arts. He showed it to me and said:

"I could teach violin".

"Can you? I didn't know you played any more. I haven't heard you play."

"I can't play on that cigarbox I have, but I can teach. I have taken violin lessons since I was six years old."

"How interesting," I said. "I didn't know that, you never told me. It never occurred to me that you could teach music. Why haven't you said anything before?"

"It never came up," he said. "Maybe I should try this."

"Of course you should. Contact them."

He came back from contacting them without much enthusiasm.

"I have to go through a three weeks training course without pay. And after that they can send me all over the country to teach."

"Can you do it?"

"I can do it, but I don't like the idea that they take advantage of people in this way, three weeks training course without pay."

"At least you don't have to pay." I prodded, "why don't you try? It can't hurt to try, and you have nothing to lose."

After three weeks of training, he said that the Institute wanted to send him to a small town in Oregon as soon as possible. He would teach beginning violin to classes already in session, and for that he would be paid \$160 dollars a month. Even in those days that was below average pay. We discussed for a while if it would be wise for us to move away from a secure place to live, and my giving up a good job to go to a new state with nothing more in sight but a third rate job offer. But we decided that it was the only job offer that had befallen Kris within any of his fields, and since there were no other opportunities standing in line waiting for him, he should take the job. He would go by himself to Oregon, and if it worked out he would send for us. In the meanwhile I would keep my job, but transportation would be a problem. There was no way I could get back and forth to the nursery school and work by myself and no busses were available that route. I would have to move to a place closer to work and where I could use public transportation back and forth to nursery school. It was no easy decision, and when I think about it now, I wonder from where we got the tenacity to proceed with such insecure and tentative plans.

When I told my colleagues at work that Kris was going to Oregon and I had to look for an apartment closer to work, one of them knew a woman who was going away for a couple of months and wanted somebody to stay in her house while she was away. I only had to pay for the utilities. I grabbed the opportunity right away.

We called Buttedal to tell him that we had to move and asked him what to do with the house. He said to rent it out for a year, and if we wanted to come back, the house was there for us. It seemed that a good fairy had placed herself on my shoulder to watch out for us for a while.

CHAPTER TEN

Renting the house didn't go as smoothly as we anticipated. A nice young couple came by as soon as our ad appeared in the paper, and they agreed to our terms. We said we had promised to see another couple before we decided, and asked them to call back. We were completely inexperienced in renting. We had no contract for anybody to sign, nor did we ask for a deposit.

As soon as the young couple left, the neighbor across the street, came over and asked us directly not to rent to the couple who had just left, because they were Mexicans.

"They seemed to be nice." I said, "What is wrong with being Mexicans? By the way, they said they were Spanish."

"They all say they are Spanish, but they are Mexicans."

"What is wrong with that," Kris asked.

"You wouldn't know about this, because you come from another country, but if you rent your house to Mexicans, the value of the property around here will go down."

"Why is that?"

"Because they always let other families move in with them, and they don't take care of the property."

"It is against our principles to discriminate against anybody," Kris said. "And the Supreme Court has just ruled that it is against the law to deny people to live where they want because of their color or race. We can't go against the law and

deny to rent to them because they are Mexicans. We have already promised them they can have it."

The neighbor didn't know what to answer and left. We hadn't promised the house to anyone yet, because we hadn't seen the other couple who had an appointment. But after they had been there we decided that we liked the first couple better, and that we would let them rent it.

The next day the neighbor was back again, and a little embarrassed gave us a piece of paper with a list of names.

"What is this?" I asked.

"It is a petition from the neighbors around here that you don't rent the property to any Mexicans."

"Is it legal?" Kris asked.

"No, but it is a request from all the people around here that you don't rent to any undesirables."

Kris took the paper and the neighbor left. Some time before, when we took out a life insurance policy, the insurance man had made a disparaging remark about Jews. We told him we didn't approve of his remark, and he apologized so much we just wanted him out of the house. To avoid scenes like that Brocken painted a wooden tray with the words "Racial Discrimination is Not Tolerated in This House" and we hung it in a prominent place in the living room. We were naive enough to think that it would keep discrimination at least away from our home.

The Mexican couple came back again to talk to us about renting the place. They wanted it very badly. We told them what had been going on and asked if they still wanted to live in the house under those circumstances. They definitely wanted the house, and later I thought that this must have been a test case, since it was so close to the Supreme Court's decision.

Kris had to leave for Oregon before I could move, and I was uneasy about having to face the neighbors alone. But nothing happened, and I later learned that the renters got along with the neighbors O.K. They had probably resigned themselves to the Supreme Court's decision. Jan and I moved to Long Beach, and some people at work helped me move my furniture. One of the nicest things about America is the way people are willing to help others in need.

I realized how spoiled I had been now when everything had to be done by me alone. Kris had always helped with physical tasks, and Brocken had never let me carry as much as a small package. Before that my brothers looked after me. Now I had to get up early in the morning to get the baby ready for nursery school, put him in the stroller to the bus station, get him and the stroller up on the bus with my arms full of baby things, purse and lunch bag. I missed Kris dreadfully. But I consoled myself that it would only be for a short while, I had a job, a nice place to live and a charming and enjoyable child.

One time I was giving that child a bath and had the towel ready to dry him when he suddenly jumped out of the bath tub, ran out the door and far down the street before I could catch him. In those days people were so prim that even a very small child could not be seen without any clothes on. I wondered if he knew how ridiculous that rule was because he gave me a mischievous smile when I grabbed him.

Kris liked Oregon. He had rented himself a room and taught classes after regular school hours. He discovered that he loved teaching and that he was good at it. He made several friends among the parents. They liked that he took a personal interest in each child, and that he had small classes. He had finally found his melody.

After a couple of months he found a house to rent within our means and came back to fetch us, and we were both more than ready to go with him. One of his newly found family friends had lent him a truck and he drove without stopping the over 700 miles from Oregon to Los Angeles. He slept for a while when he came home and then started loading the truck. He had nobody to help him, and refused my help. He moved our heavy diningroom furniture on to the truck with an ingenuity I didn't know he possessed. I learned new things about him all the time.

It was the end of the summer when we were on our way to Oregon. We left behind the golden state of California and our big expectations. There would be no riches from my book, no directing jobs for Kris. I also left behind my Pied Piper and his ideas about a "Leisure Time Society," an improbable dream where people would work only until they were 30 years old, and then retire. What was left now were our strong constitutions and a determination to make a living for ourselves, so that Jan would never want. We were to settle down in a small community and live the life of an everyday family. As it turned out the small town in Oregon became a safe place in which to bring up a child.

BOOK FIVE

Scenes From Oregon

First House and Job

It was a long drive to Oregon, and we found a cheap motel on the way to stay over. The place we had rented was a very small two-bedroom house, but we thought it would be cozy enough when we got the furniture placed and the pictures on the wall. It was not before we had cleaned out the kitchen cupboards and put all the food where it belonged that we discovered the mice. They must have had a nest inside the walls because they were into everything. That took away the pleasure of having a house and of cooking for my family. I dreaded every time I needed to go out to the kitchen. I heard the mice gnaw in the walls, and I knew that we could never live like normal people as long as the mice were there. We put tin cans on the counter-top to put flour and sugar in, and rest of the food we put in the ice-box. But even as careful as we were in not leaving food out, we always found proof that the mice had visited us during the night.

We had come to America to find a better life. When we realized that was a pipe dream, we at least wanted to live as well as we had in our own country or as refugees in Sweden. All we wanted was a decent place to live and jobs for both of us so that we could take care of our needs. Now I started to wonder if that would happen. Doubt was always in the back of my mind. Did we do the right thing in leaving California where we had our own house and I at least had a reputable job? It seemed like every big move ^{we} did, was for the worse.

A couple of days after our arrival I went to the employment office to ask for a job. They sent me right up to a place that sold automobile parts, and the next day I was working. Fortunately Kris didn't start to teach before school was out for the day, and then he took Jan with him and let him play in a corner when he gave his classes. It was a small town, and it didn't take many minutes to get from place to place, which was good for us.

Two days after I started, the office manager asked me if I could work the machine faster. I explained to him that it was a different machine from what I had used before, and asked him to have patience a couple of days. He must have been satisfied with my work because after a week he gave me a raise in salary. I didn't like my job. It was tedious and boring, and I often remembered Brocken's words: "Anyone who works in an office, deserves it." On the other hand I found his words demeaning. He had been endowed with unusual talents and didn't need to work in an office, but that gave no answer to what a person like me would have to do to avoid it. We desperately needed money for housing and food, and the only way to get it was for me to work. We couldn't live on what Kris was making.

A Neighbor

A neighbor and mother to one of Kris' students stopped by one evening with her two children. We were glad to see her, served coffee and cookies and talked. She stayed on longer than people normally do when they call on you without being invited, but around eleven o'clock she finally made signs to leave. We thanked her for coming and said casually: "Come again."

She did. She came every day earlier and earlier and stayed longer and longer. When we sat down to eat dinner, my Norwegian taught manners couldn't help but ask if they had eaten, and when they said no, I invited them to eat with us. After dinner the children played with Jan, who was happy to have other children to play with, but after he went to bed, her children went to sleep where they sat, without asking to go home. I often went to bed before they left. We asked if her husband didn't mind her being gone so much, but she said he was a railroad man and was traveling a lot. The only time Kris and I were alone was when her husband was home. I don't know why we let her tyrannize us the way she did. We had no private lives of our own. Kris and I talked about it but didn't know how to stop her from coming. This was still the time of pretension when people didn't talk straight to one another. Both of us had been brought up in a culture where guests were considered holy, whether we had invited them or not.

Fortunately there was a young woman at work with whom I could talk. She was newly married and her husband worked for her father, who owned a furniture finishing shop. Her husband apparently didn't get along with her father, and she thought they wouldn't be in town too long. She knew I wanted another place to live and suggested that I put myself on the list where she lived, a housing project built during the war years. The apartments were clean and nice and cheaper than the house we were renting. Nine months after we had lived in that dreadful house, our name came up and we were eligible for the apartment. We were happy to say farewell to the mice and escape the intruding neighbors. My new friend lived downstairs from us, and sometimes we drove to work together. For a while I felt we almost lived a normal life. I was so relieved to get rid of the mice that I enjoyed my new apartment very much. How easily people adjust to situations they could hardly have imagined under other circumstances was a topic I wanted to write about one day.

Goodbye to the Institute

For a couple of months we lived like other people. Together our incomes were adequate, albeit not big. Then things started to happen. Kris was due his regular paycheck and instead of 160 dollars the check was only for 98 dollars. The accompanying letter explained that since Kris hadn't brought in more business and his classes were too small, they couldn't pay him a full salary. Kris had been adamant in not having bigger classes, but it had somehow escaped him that it was his duty to solicit students. Both ideas were unacceptable to him, but he hadn't expected that they would cut his salary. He was furious.

He raved and ranted for a while, and then he told the parents with whom he had made friends that he would not be able to teach their children any more. When the parents heard the reason he would quit teaching, they became angry and called together a parents meeting. Kris explained that he couldn't live on 98 dollars per month and said that he was there to teach, not to solicit new students. To have bigger classes would mean he couldn't give individual attention which was so important to violin students. The parents asked why they couldn't pay him directly instead of paying the Institute, and Kris said that he didn't have instruments for the students, neither did he have a studio without which there could be no lessons. He told them he had resigned from the Institute and he was sorry to discontinue their association.

The parents wanted another meeting before they gave up on Kris, and at that meeting the spokesman for the parents said they could rent instruments from the local store, and if he would be willing to come to their homes, they wanted to keep him as their teacher. And that was the way it turned out to be. The Institute was kicked out of that town, never to return. In the beginning Kris kept all the students and he charged them two dollars per hour. However, as often happens with music students, some lost interest and dropped out, and he ended up making a lot less than 160 dollars per month. But he was a free agent and liked his work. In a way I envied him, for I hated my job. There was no way for me to quit if we wanted to survive, and I felt trapped. I also felt that Kris should show more interest in earning a living and not leaving it all to me.

The Theater Group

The town was excited about having a live actor in their midst and wanted to start a little theater group. Kris knew exactly what was needed and organized every aspect of the group in a short time. Within a few months of our arrival the group was active and rehearsing "You Can't Take it With You." I was in charge of the program, and asked my former tenacious neighbor, Nellie, to canvass the merchants for advertisements. She was very successful and we had no trouble getting the supplies we needed. She was also very good in helping to build the stage set.

The actors were everybody. There were plenty of people wanting to be in on this event, and Kris was the sole Commander in Chief. He picked the people who had a good voice whether they had any experience or not, and he made them come to rehearsals. At the first inkling that anybody couldn't come to rehearsal, he said:

"You are either in or out. We need to rehearse, and before you commit to any part, be aware that you have to come to every rehearsal. The only excuse I'll take is if you are deadly ill. Everybody is dependent upon everybody else, and if one isn't here, we might as well fold up and go home. I can't direct a play if not everybody is here to rehearse. That's all I'll say about it and it is final."

He sounded both ferocious and earnest, and the aspiring actors sat up and took notice. I watched the rehearsals as much as I could without disturbing Jan's regular schedule. I saw people who had never before been in a play or even seen a play, learn to talk, walk, turn around and take command of the situation. Kris was rough on the players. If they didn't immediately do as he instructed, he screamed at them, and they learned fast to do what they were told. I hoped they wouldn't get mad and quit.

Dress rehearsal was hectic, and I heard a lot of murmuring among the players that they would never be in another play, Kris was impossible, he was too demanding, etc. etc. But all was forgotten after the play became a success and got a good write-up in the paper. At the party after the last performance, the players couldn't praise Kris enough. They gave him a present and wanted to know when and what the next play would be.

There were many plays after that, and the one I remember best of all happened about seven or eight years later. Senator Neuberger was coming to town, and the Democratic Party wanted to entertain him. He was coming the night "*Two Blind Mice*" opened, and since it was a political play, Nellie had painted a picture which looked like Senator Morse and hung it as a prop on the stage. Senator Morse had just defected from the Republican party and the Oregonian Republicans naturally hated him for it.

The Speech

Being new in town and from a country that had been in a war, Kris and I were much sought after as speakers. I had never before been in front of an audience, my voice doesn't carry well, and I am shy. But when the AAUW asked me to speak about some of my experiences during the war, I thought this would be a chance to speak out against racism and accepted. I had published an article in Sweden during the war, which was later picked up by a Norwegian newspaper, and took excerpts from that and made it into a speech.

I started out telling them a little about myself and about some of the discrimination with which I had been affronted, and some stories about friends of mine and what they had been through. I went on to say that aside from Hitler and his henchmen "...I cannot, I will not believe that any normal human being in any country agreed with the treatment of Jews and other minorities. ...the anti-Semites by conviction are comparatively small, even though we have signs of the swastika and burning of synagogues. The real danger today comes from an army of thoughtless prejudices, and if we want to fight anti-semitism, we must first of all fight this thoughtlessness."

"Let me mention a few examples of thoughtless expressions that hurt more than people usually understand, certainly more than they intend.

Often someone has said to me: "I have nothing against you. I like you, you are different, you are not like a Jew at all." Of all kinds of insults, this is perhaps the worst. I believe most Jews have been spoken to in this patronizing manner one time or another.

Or "I am not an anti-Semite. I have many Jewish friends, but I was cheated once by a Jew, and since then I don't trust them."

What can I say to that? "Almost six million Jews were killed by Gentiles during the last war... should I tell you that I don't trust you because you are Gentiles?..."

I went on in that direction for about one half hour. I didn't look up much, I more or less read from my manuscript, but I had their attention. I tried to speak as loudly and as distinctly as possible, and when I was through with the speech and looked up, I didn't expect applause. This was not the speech they had anticipated. They had thought I would talk about my experiences during the war, which at that time was hard for me to

do, especially with people I didn't know. These women had not wanted me to give them a lecture in thoughtless behavior.

Nevertheless they were kind and gave me a good hand. Many of them came up to me afterwards and told me: "We needed that." But none of them asked me to speak again in any other groups.

How well I remembered the thoughtless expression I had used about black sailors, and how Brocken had let me know exactly how thoughtless I had been. I had felt embarrassed and stupid for not knowing better, and I am sure many of these women felt the same. And I thought to myself that if I had only changed one mind I would have done a good service, and I felt good about having made that speech.

The Music Group

We were asked to join a group of classical music lovers who would meet at one another's homes once a week and listen to music. We had no phonograph and records at that time and were delighted to be included. It is hard to imagine now after the hundreds of symphony concerts we have attended that at one time we sat around as quiet as we would have been in a concert hall and listened to symphonies, concertos, chamber music, and operas with equal respect and interest. When we got our first Magnavox radio and record-player we were proud to invite the group to our home to listen. We met people in that group who are still our friends, and it is good to look back and realize that even in small towns in Oregon there are music lovers who hunger for classical music. Jan was with us as a rule and although he wouldn't sit still, he must have listened and absorbed.

New Kitchen Floor

We ended up living in the housing project for more than three years, and Jan started first grade at Mills School. When we discovered that we could buy things on credit for as little as five dollars per month, we said goodbye to the second hand refrigerator and bought a new one. We also bought some living-room furniture and a couple of lamps, even a book-case. The apartment looked nice, as nice as anything could look in such a dismal building. The linoleum in the kitchen was worn, and we decided that we needed to put in a new cover. The only way we could afford to do that was to do it ourselves.

I had never done any manual labor in my life, but Kris couldn't do it alone. I had to help. I did all the measuring. To convert the metric system into feet and inches was no easy task. We wanted to spend as little money as possible in a place not included in our future, and we bought the least expensive material we could get, which was one big piece of linoleum to cover the whole floor. The squares of linoleum would have been a lot easier to put down, but the cost was considerably more.

It was laborious to get the long piece of linoleum up the narrow steps to the second floor where we lived, a matter we hadn't given any thought when we bought it. It tended to be our Achilles Heel that we learned our lessons on the spot, when we

could have saved ourselves a lot of trouble by doing some investigating in the beginning. At least, we never made the same mistake twice. When we struggled to get the long piece of linoleum through the narrow door, Kris was ordering me to do this and to do that. We struggled profusely before we got the thing into the apartment, and by that time I was ready to strangle him. I hated to have him ordering me around and as I said before, manual labor was not my forte. If we hadn't already taken off the old linoleum, I would have given up the project right then.

But it had to be done. The piece we had bought didn't quite fit. Of course, it was my fault because I hadn't measured right. With a little pen knife we had to cut a little here and a little there to get it to fit. Not having decent tools to work with didn't help the situation any. I measured and Kris cut, and our tempers got hotter and hotter, I didn't measure right and he didn't cut where I told him. Our marriage during all these years has had a few scrimmages, but this became one of the more serious ones. We had moved everything out of the kitchen, even the refrigerator, but the gas stove we didn't dare to touch, since none of us knew how to turn off the gas. Kris told me I had to lift the stove up while he pushed the linoleum under.

I tried to lift the stove. It wouldn't move. Kris got up from his position to help me and lifted it with ease:

"It isn't heavy. Hold it there until I tell you to let go."

"If I can, I will."

"You have to. It isn't heavy."

It was heavy for me. The edge of the stove cut into my hands and I screamed:

"Hurry up, I can't hold it any longer."

"Hold on, I am almost done."

I couldn't hold on, and Kris got up from the floor again to help me lift it. This happened two or three times more. The palms of my hands had fiery red streaks that hurt badly, and I was frustrated and angry enough to cry. However, when I saw how nice the new floor looked, the tears disappeared. Then Kris told me a silly Norwegian joke that made me laugh until the tears came back. I believe that our marriage was saved many times because Kris could always make me laugh when I was the most angry.

Everyday Life

Mr. Loney, the Superintendent of Music in the public schools had taken an interest in Kris and given him a few hours work teaching strings in two grade schools. Even together with his private students the work still didn't amount to a living wage. This had been a cause of discontent between us for a while. I wanted Kris to look for a full time job, and he wanted to hang on to the school job which he thought would in time become valuable. We both knew he needed a teacher's certificate to get a full time job, and he would have to go back to school to get it. We had not yet figured out how this could be done, and I was getting impatient. I was still working in the same job, and time had not made the job more attractive, just easier and more boring than ever.

Kris got along with the students very well, but he seemed to be on edge with other teachers constantly. The point of dissension was the classroom teachers' unwillingness to let the students out of their regular classes to attend music classes. Kris insisted that the students be on time to music class, for he only had forty minutes twice weekly, and being a perfectionist he didn't want to give up any precious moments. It was his contention that the parents wanted music for their children and invested money in instruments and upkeep, and since music was offered in the schools, the teachers ought to honor the

program. This expostulation between music teachers and regular teachers occurred in every school where he taught up to the day he retired. The other music teachers had years of experience and knew the problem well. They had long since been unwilling to make an issue of it, but Kris was full of energy and ideals and ready to fight for his principles: the students' right to learn and the teacher's right to teach.

When I got tired of hearing his laments, he found an ear in Maja, mother to two of his students and whose family soon became good friends of ours. Maja and Kris became so close that they had long telephone conversations every day. Kris became to her the brother she had lost in the war, and he substituted her for Brocken. Brocken had always been very patient in listening to Kris and discussing with him daily.

I became fond of Maja too, and didn't mind their close relationship. I knew how important it was to have a close friend, and I missed Brocken as profusely as I missed Bengt. I corresponded with both regularly, but letters couldn't make up for the personal contact. I became very lonely and nurtured my own private thoughts about what could have been. While holding on to the hand everyday life offered, I never accepted it and created my own secret fantasy world. If life wasn't what I had hoped for, the enjoyment of my child and his sunny disposition made up for a lot of lost hopes and expectations. But the

insecurity of our future gave me anxiety. The lopsided burden of responsibility angered me. What irritated me most though, was Kris' advantage in doing what he liked, while I was doing dog work and he thinking it was O.K. for me because I did it so well.

Another correspondence friend made my life a little more interesting. The lawyer, Mr. Parker, who helped us with our citizenship papers, asked me to write to him. His wife had died, and he too was lonely. He liked the way I wrote letters and wanted me to keep writing about what was on my mind. It was Kris who had kept up the correspondence with him about our papers, but it was I who kept on writing to him for several years both before and after we received our papers. I meant to keep this correspondence and thought I had taken care of it, but much to my sorrow I can't find the letters now. They must have been lost when we moved from California to Missouri. Mr. Parker was an interesting and well read man, very interested in the Eastern religions, and wrote a lot about Islam.

While we lived in the housing project, Cica came to stay with us. We had met Cica and her mother Rozsi on the ship over from Sweden, and had been in contact with them all this time. The family, father, mother, daughter, were Czechoslovakians, and during Hitler's regime were interned in a concentration camp. The father had died there, but Cica and Rozsi had been rescued by the Swedish Count Bernadotte at the end of the war. They both

had numbers burned on their underarms, which moved me to tears when I first saw them.

Rozsi had married again, and the new family lived in New York City on Fifth Avenue. At that time I had no idea how well off they were or how elegantly they lived. Cica had just finished her degree in psychology at Columbia University and was coming to the West Coast on a vacation. She wanted to visit us, and we were delighted to have the opportunity of seeing her again. We had been together only a short time but had bonded right away.

When we met again, the bond was still there. She knew we had been having a hard time; still I think she was surprised to see our unsophisticated living quarters. She loved Jan instantly, and the two of them had a good time together. I still have the two cotton tablecloths she bought as a house present for everyday use. They must be over forty years old now, and every time I use them I think of her. She was a breath of fresh air from the outside world to our narrow existence in the small town in Oregon.

First Grade

Jan seemed to like school and the social atmosphere of so many children. The atmosphere may have been a little too social for the teacher, for one day when Kris came to pick Jan up from school he found him with his mouth taped. Kris was literally fit to be tied. With a booming voice he ordered the teacher to undo what she had done, and then marched with her to the principal's office to complain. It was not the first time he had been to the principal's office. He taught a class in that school, and had also been a substitute teacher once. The teacher for whom he had been substituting had accused him of not teaching "*The American Way*," and Kris had demanded an explanation from the principal. He was young and feisty. His unused energy made every event into a dramatic situation. This time he came as a parent, he told the principal, and he was disgusted that a teacher would humiliate a first grader in front of his class. He threatened with a lawsuit if the teacher ever again touched his son.

This happened in the spring, and by next fall we had moved to a house in another district. We never saw that teacher again, but heard that she had married the music teacher who complained that Kris wasn't teaching "*The American Way*." I am sure they deserved each other.

Andy Loney

Andy was, as I mentioned earlier, the Superintendent of Music in the school system, and he must have thought Kris taught well enough whether he used "The American Way" or "The Norwegian Way," because he became Kris' mentor, and later a dear friend. Loney had the best music department in Southern Oregon. His choir and band always had command performances at the yearly music teacher's contests. The orchestra lagged behind because there was no good string teacher in town before Kris appeared. Without Kris having a teacher's certificate, however, Andy could only hire him on temporary basis. As Kris' popularity grew, so did the string program, and he got more and more hours. Still, without a teacher's certificate there was no future for him in the public school music program, and it became clear that he must take up his studies again. Andy taught at Portland University during the summers, and he recommended that Kris go there. He also promised him a fulltime job after he got his degree. Kris got all his papers and resume together, and prepared to go back to school during the summers.

The summer of 1952 was the first time Kris went away to Portland, and Jan and I were alone again. I worked, of course. My paycheck was our only source of income, and it had to take care of everything except school expenses. Those we borrowed from the Credit Union, which became our true friend for many,

many years. The Teacher's Credit Union was set up to help teachers, and at that time it really did. The money was easy to get, and the interest low. Kris qualified because he taught in the school system.

It was cumbersome to be alone again, but Jan was a precocious child, understanding far beyond his years. He was also a delightful person to be around. Had he been a difficult and unhappy child, I doubt Kris and I could have gone through all those summers apart. The promise of job security also made it easier for us to submit to those uphill years. It was hard for Kris to go back to school, mostly because his English was far from perfect, and partly because he didn't know how to type. He sent his papers for me to type, and I sent them back the day after I got them. We had no trouble with the mail at that time.

All this time I was neglecting my own needs and desires. The prevalent objective was to get through one hurdle, then the next, and the next. I never seemed to be important as a person. My job was to work so that we could get through the difficulties in the best possible way. I told myself that writing wasn't my life after all; it was only something Brocken had convinced me I should do. If I really wanted to write, wouldn't I be as committed as Jan was to music or Kris to teaching?

The first summer was the hardest. I didn't drive and had to take busses to work and the grocery store. One of Kris' oldest students also lived in the housing project, and she babysat with Jan that first summer. He seemed to thrive as long as he had someone to play with. He never complained and was a loving and happy little boy.

The next summer we had moved to a house two blocks from Main Street, which made everything easier for me. I could walk to work, walk to the grocery store, and even windowshop on Main Street. But the move changed our lives around again.

Music Lessons

Florence and her little golden cocker spaniel, Angel, came into our lives through the *Little Theater Group*. She played the mother in "You Can't Take it With You." Florence had been married twice. The first marriage produced two sons who by the time we met, were both in college. The second time Florence married a German artist who had come to America right after WWI. He had a title and above average talent and made his living as an artist for a while. Something went sour with the marriage, and they divorced but remained friends. Florence had been a concert pianist before her first marriage, but after the first divorce had been reduced to entertain the public at silent movies. When the talking pictures took over, she had to start a new career. She went back to school to get an elementary teacher's certificate, and had been teaching primary grades since.

Florence was good in her acting role, showing a flair of artistry, but decided that a big part like the one she had just finished was too much for her. She had had a few blackout spells lately and thought she needed more rest. To visit a doctor to find out what was wrong was out of the question for she was a Christian Scientist.

We became friendly, and she showed a special interest in Jan. Kris had started him on the violin when he was between five and six years old, and he showed a natural talent for music. He played in the elementary string group, made up of children from the fifth and sixth grades. When Kris needed another viola in that group, Jan had no trouble changing over, and Kris understood that he had an unusual talent for music. Some day, Florence said, she would like to teach him to play the piano.

She would like to move to another place, she told me, because in her rented room she had no place for her piano. She needed to give piano lessons to pay for a small house in Monterey, California, where she planned to retire in a few years. She expected to rent the house until she was ready to move in, but hadn't had any takers yet. She longed to live in a house but couldn't possibly afford to rent one by herself. Since we needed to get away from the housing project and the school Jan was attending, we explored the possibility of maybe renting a larger house together and share expenses.

We decided we needed a big house, because Florence wanted a place where she could teach and also a place to house her son and his family when they came to visit. One son had been in a rare accident about a year before, which unfortunately resulted in his death. The other son had graduated from college and was

teaching math in a high school in California. He was married and had a daughter.

We found a big old house close to the center of town that suited all of us well. The small top floor was rented, but we could have the rest of the house for 90 dollars per month. Soon after we had put a deposit on the house, Florence changed the arrangement of sharing the expenses, the arrangement that had first made this move possible. She argued that since she would only use one room, she wouldn't need to pay half the utilities, and she could only afford to pay 50 dollars a month for rent. I asked what she intended to do when her son came to visit, but she shrugged that off as just a bagatelle that wasn't worth talking about. If we would have the piano in our living room, she would give Jan free music lessons for the privilege of teaching her other students there, and Jan could practice on her piano. We should have known right away that this arrangement boded no good. But we were eager to move and accepted her terms.

Before we moved we were going to share groceries and take turns cooking and cleaning. That changed too. Florence stated that she would pay us five dollars per week for food since she was only having cereal and milk for breakfast, and after the big lunch she had at school, she would eat very little at night. I have never been stingy with food, and for breakfast I put the same things in front of her as I did for my family. She never

said no. I was cooking, of course. When I asked when she would cook, she laughed and said that she didn't know how to cook, and I did it so well, she couldn't compete with me. After breakfast she proceeded to make her lunch for school, and at dinner time she ate with us again, as much as any of us.

When time came for cleaning, she polished her own piano, complaining constantly of greasy fingers on the piano, never leaving us in doubt that she referred to Jan. I told her Jan always washed his hands before he touched the piano, so it must be her other students. Kris and I did all the rest of the cleaning. I knew she was taking advantage of us, but I don't think she meant to. I also knew that I should have spoken up, but I was reluctant to make an issue of everything. All went well for a few months, until the winter sat in and the heating bill came. It shocked us to see that the bill only for one month was ninety dollars. Our budget couldn't possibly absorb such a large bill. We had long thought the house was too warm for us, but had kept quiet because Florence was older and not feeling well. We thought she maybe needed more heat. We tried to tell her we needed to cut down the heat because we couldn't afford to pay the bill, but she insisted she needed the heat. Kris and I turned off the heating vents in our rooms to try to save.

The next bill was as big, and we were frantic. We hadn't paid all of the first bill, and this was getting serious. We

couldn't understand why turning off the vents didn't help, until I came into Florence's room to dust and was met with 90 degree heat. We asked if she wouldn't please turn down the heat when she was not there, and she grudgingly agreed. We were devastated by those bills, but made arrangements to pay a certain amount every month so that we could budget our expenses.

Jan got his music lessons and was progressing fast, but the constant complaints about him messing up her piano when he practiced made us think about getting a piano of our own. We looked in the local music store. Mr Mann, the owner of the store, was a nice person. He helped us find an old upright with good sound that we could have for \$100 dollars and pay only ten dollars per month, interest free. We said we would think about it. We could hardly afford to pay for heat, but a piano for Jan was important. We talked about it for five minutes and went back to tell Mr. Mann we would take it. When Jan sat down and played the piano Mr. Mann recognized his talent and promised us that when we came back to get a better piano, the money we had paid on the old one could be used as a down payment for a new piano.

The day after we bought the piano our living arrangements blew up. It started with rumors about Jan not liking school and not wanting to go to school. Kris heard it from other teachers in the school where he and Florence both taught. I suppose it

stemmed from the time Jan stayed home from school when he had swollen glands. He wasn't very sick, but the doctor told us to keep him home. He was playing and having a good time in bed, and Florence, being a Christian Scientist, thought he only pretended to be sick. Why she felt she had to talk about our private affairs to other teachers was beyond my understanding. I hadn't then discovered how interested people were in other people's everyday life, which became so obvious when TV took over with never ending soap operas.

Kris confronted Florence with the rumors, and said he didn't want any gossip about Jan or us from her or anybody else. Kris has never been a diplomatic talker, and Florence got so mad over the accusation of being the bearer of gossip that she slapped him. He slapped her right back, not hard, just enough to tell her he was insulted and wasn't going to stand for physical abuse. She went into hysterics, screamed that he had slapped the bad side of her head, he was a terrible man and she was going to sue him. I was horrified and didn't know what to do. Florence went into her room and slammed the door. Fortunately Jan was not around. It would have been hard to explain to him that this was grown up behavior.

After a while Florence came out from her room and said she was sorry she had slapped Kris. He said he was sorry about the whole situation. I said we could certainly not go on living

together any more, it simply didn't work out, and we would help her find an apartment. The apartment upstairs had been empty for a while, and we had hinted that it would suit Florence perfectly. But she had insisted that she couldn't handle the stairs carrying groceries and packages and walking the dog.

When we mentioned that apartment again, she came with the same excuses, but Kris offered to take her to the grocery store, carry her groceries and walk the dog. That changed the picture right away. A couple of days later she was settled upstairs with Angel and her piano. She had professionals move the piano; Kris did all the other moving for her. It was a perfect apartment for one person. It had an outside entrance, a fairly large living room, a bedroom, bath and kitchen. And the price was reasonable, although she complained that she couldn't afford to pay so much for rent and still keep up the payments on her house in Monterey.

We continued being friends. Jan got free lessons in return for the help Florence got from us, which included taking care of Angel when she couldn't. She offered to let Jan practice on her piano, but since we had already bought one of our own, her offer became moot.

I had learned my lesson. Never again did I want to share my home. When people live together, their worst instincts and

behavior patterns prevail. By having Florence live by herself, we couldn't do enough to make her life easier, and she behaved as she had before, showing us respect and consideration. We continued being friends for the rest of her life, even after she retired and moved to California. She never got to live in her house in Monterey. She sold that and bought a trailer close to her son and his family.

The extra rent we had to pay was compensated for in lesser heating and electric bills. But we continued to live on a shoestring until Kris got a fulltime job.

Job Laments

The only reason I kept my job was that I was doing excellent work. I had been taking correspondence courses in accounting from Chicago University, which took me far above the level on which I was working. But the pay was decent, and the thought of hunting for another job made my stomach ache. I stayed on even though none of the people in the office liked me. I wasn't submissive enough to suit them. I thought my submissiveness had already gone too far and it was degrading. For instance, when I was told that I should be careful about talking Norwegian to my husband on the telephone, I kept quiet instead of stating: *this is a free country. I should be able to give my husband a short message without being overheard.* I kept quiet because I needed the job. Then a notice came around to everybody that the telephone could only be used for business. It would be tapped to see that we complied with the rules. I again kept quiet. I wasn't too proud of myself.

The girl with whom I worked side by side was always complaining about our supervisor who wanted the invoices on her desk sooner than we sometimes were able to deliver. I liked the supervisor better than I liked Ruth, whom I actually despised because of her crudeness and vulgarity. Then the supervisor quit, and Ruth took her place. A new girl, Lory was hired, and she was just as uneducated and ignorant as Ruth. The work

was dull enough, but to work with those two women made my job a true burden. When I complained to Kris, he told me to quit. When I asked him where the money would come from, we ended up in one of our frequent fights.

One day Ruth started to ask for the invoices faster than we could deliver and I said:

"Now you are doing the same thing to us that you constantly complained about before. Don't you realize what you are doing?"

Before I knew it, I felt a stinging pain on my cheek. Ruth had sneaked up behind my back and slapped me. I was so stunned I just sat for a while, then I got up, walked over to the office manager, who had observed the incident and said:

"I am going to the police to report her."

Then I left. The police station was only a few blocks away.

I reported the incident. The officers asked why I hadn't slapped her back, and I said haughtily:

"That was below my dignity."

They typed the report, I signed it and went back to work. Nothing was said in the office. It was completely quiet there except for the noise from the bookkeeping machines and the ringing of the telephones. After work I walked home as usual and told Kris. He said:

"You did the right thing."

The next day at work the manager approached me and asked very softly what it would take for me to rescind the arrest order on my co-worker. He was thankful that I hadn't slapped her back and thereby made a scene in the office. He also said that Ruth was very sorry it had happened and was willing to give me a public apology.

"Otherwise the police will come and put handcuffs on her and she will go to jail."

"I didn't know that would happen," I answered. "I thought the police would only come and give her a warning and scare her from treating people that way. I don't want to do her any harm, but I want her to know that such behavior is not acceptable. I want her to apologize here in the office, and I also want a written apology."

"She will give you that. She is very sorry. She had a bad day yesterday, troubles at home, and she promises that it will never happen again."

Ruth tearfully apologized, and I formally accepted her apology. The whole scene was embarrassing. I also received a written apology and a promise that such a thing would never again happen.

That was as close to excitement anyone in that office had ever experienced. A short time later the manager retired, and we got a new manager. I had worked at that place for four and a half years and had never had anybody criticize my work. I felt quite secure in my job.

The new manager was more aggressive than his predecessor. He was a man after Senator McCarthy's own heart, and he let his ideas be known. He talked about communism and Paul Robeson, who had defected to Russia and converted to communism. Paul Robeson, the famous black singer and actor, put the whole country in uproar by becoming a Russian citizen.

I listened to their talk for a while, but finally couldn't keep my mouth shut. I said:

"I can understand why Paul Robeson turned communist. He certainly doesn't have any rights here."

The manager instantly asked:

"Are you a communist?"

"I am not. I was thoroughly checked out before I was allowed into this country. But I have read a lot about their ideologies. Have you read anything about communism?"

"Of course I have not. I wouldn't read any of that filthy literature, I have better things to do."

"If you don't read, how do you know it's filthy? How can you condemn a thing you know nothing about?"

"I know enough about communism to know it is bad. Don't you think it is bad?"

"If I do it is based upon knowledge, not upon ignorance. "

As soon as the words were out of my mouth, I realized the arrogance of my remark. I had always been used to voice my opinion without softening the language, but it was the wrong thing to do here. The room became quiet.

Before I went home that day, the manager came over to my desk and said:

"You should be careful about what you are saying. You are a foreigner here, don't forget that."

"I thought this was a free country where you could express your opinions whether you were a foreigner or not. This country is built on foreigners, don't you forget."

He turned and walked away. I knew he was angry.

A short time thereafter, on a Monday, Ruth quit, and I thought I was in line for the better paid job. However, the new girl got it, and then I knew the manager had it in for me. On Thursday the same week I was laid up with a bad back, and when I called in sick, the manager told me to stay out over the weekend. The following Monday morning he told me that I would be much happier working another place. In other words, he fired me.

Kris was furious. He went to the owner to tell him what was going on, but he certainly didn't get any sympathy there. At least Kris told him what he thought of such behavior and such policy.

I didn't waste any time looking for another job and went to the unemployment office to fill out papers for unemployment compensation. Before I turned in my papers for unemployment, I was sent on an interview to a wholesale grocery store. I immediately was employed as their accountant with the same salary I had received at the other place. The store was farther away, so I couldn't walk to work as I had done before. Kris had to drive me in the mornings, but in the evenings I took the bus home.

This new job was more challenging. The correspondence course I had labored through came in handy. I had oversight of the whole business and did the profit and loss statement. Here I worked mostly by myself in the office, except when the owner was in. I was glad to get away from the other place, but it bothered me that I had been fired because I didn't think I deserved that just because I had spoken my mind. This was the first time I worked with people who didn't like me personally. I had not been given the opportunity to advance because I was of another political philosophy. I had up to then thought the quality of work was an important factor in America. That was the impression I had had when I worked for the newspaper. Obviously that was not true everywhere.

McCarthy Scare

The University Women probably had a hard time getting speakers for their programs, or had forgotten the speech I had held, for a couple of years later they asked Kris if he would give a lecture about the difference between Norwegian and American democracies. Kris, eager to wave Norway's flag, accepted.

The lecture itself went fine, it was the questions afterwards that became a problem. They asked him about the judicial system, and he explained that in Norway the sheriffs and judges were not elected, but selected according to merit. They were not elected merely on a nice personality, or for pay back from a political crony, it was their educational background that was the important factor.

One of the ladies argued that Norway could not be a democracy if the people were not allowed to elect their officials. In true democracies the people ruled, elections were essential. Kris argued that everybody would be better off if the law enforcement people were better educated. As it was now they often bungled their cases just because they were uneducated. They too often used the gun when it was not necessary. The lady, who was the daughter of a judge, insisted that Norway could not be a democracy, and asked him if he was an American.

"I am not an american citizen yet," he answered, "but I will always feel like a Norwegian. As you know, blood is thicker than water."

Not much was said after that, and Kris had forgotten the whole incident until one day he was called into Mr. Loney's office and asked:

"Are you a communist?"

"No, I am not, never have been. Why do you ask?"

"I didn't think so, but I had to ask," Andy answered as he handed him a letter.

The letter was from the lady with whom he had argued after his lecture, and it warned Andy that Kris was a communist, since he thought more of his own country than of America, and his own country was not a democracy. Kris explained what had happened, and the two of them had a good laugh. Nothing more came of it.

Thinking of it now and knowing what happened during the McCarthy era, the case could have been far from a laughing matter if Andy Loney had not been the person he was. He was a great human being, and I salute him for it. We were living during a dangerous time. I was fired because I spoke my mind, and Kris was accused of being a communist because he said that blood was thicker than water. Many people were not as lucky as we were during that period.

The Wooden Flute

When Jan was in the second grade one of the music teachers in the school system became interested in him and wanted to teach him to play the flute. Florence was still giving him piano lessons, but Kris thought it was important for him to play an instrument other than the violin. It seemed not to be a good idea for Jan to take lessons from his own father. So we rented a flute for him, and he started lessons. It didn't take long before he was playing.

One day he went with me to work at my new job. I asked him how the lessons were coming, and he answered:

"Fine, do you want me to play something for you?"

"Can you play already?" I asked in wonder. "You've only had a few lessons. You mean you can play a melody that I will recognize? I thought the first year was only devoted to scales and exercises."

He laughed at the ignorance of his mother and said that of course he could play a melody. He took up his instrument and played all the Christmas melodies as easily as he if he hadn't done anything else for years. That was the first time I realized how truly talented he was, and I have been in awe of his talent ever since.

He needed an instrument of his own, and since we didn't have money to buy one, Kris wrote his aunt in Norway and asked if she would send Jan a flute. One day it was there - a beautiful-looking black wooden flute with a silver head joint and shiny silvery keys. None of us knew anything about flutes, and we were all delighted over this new beautiful instrument.

Jan learned to play on that wooden flute and won both prizes and a scholarship with it. Nobody told him that it was an impossible instrument to play until he was fourteen years old. Then he had won a scholarship to a summer music camp at Lake Tahoe where the "great" Julius Baker was giving lessons to the three scholarship winners. Mr. Baker took one look at Jan's flute and refused to give him lessons or listen to him because the flute was not fit to play on. To get lessons from Mr. Baker you needed a professional silver flute with open holes, either a Haynes or a Powell. The wooden flute with its conical body and split E mechanism just wouldn't do.

Jan told me later that he didn't find out about the complicated split E mechanism until he was forty years old. I still don't know what it does or doesn't do, but I am sure a flutist would know. Mr. Baker made fun of the wooden flute and told him to get a Haynes or a Powell before he would even listen to him.

In distress Jan called his father and told him his predicament. Fortunately Kris had a friend in Portland who owned a Haynes. He called her instantly and asked if Jan could borrow the flute while he was at music camp. When the answer was affirmative, Kris drove the 300 miles to Portland, picked up the flute, drove to Lake Tahoe and delivered the flute to a frustrated and angry boy. Jan was excited when he received the flute, and though it was leaking and he had never played on an open-hole flute before, he practiced until he could play the concert piece he had been working on "Chaminade." At least he got to perform it. Kris rested for a while before he drove the long way home again.

A friend who owned a business in town, had been taking flute lessons from Jan for a while so that he could play in a little group of professional people that Kris had put together. He was also the proud owner of a Haynes, and through connections in New York located another Haynes flute that Jan could buy for a fair price right away. Otherwise he would have to be on a waiting list for two years before delivery. By now we had all been getting a short but intensive course in flutes, their worth and availabilities. Jan put in an order for a Powell flute and was promised delivery six years later. By that time we hoped we would have saved up enough money to pay for it.

We wanted to sell the wooden flute to help pay for the new flute, but Jan protested. It was HIS flute and he wanted to keep it. Besides it wouldn't be right to sell a new student a flute which was impossible to play on. We couldn't argue that point, and somehow we found the money to pay for the Haynes.

Jan still has the wooden flute which now has become a relic. I doubt that he will ever part with it.

Citizenship

We had been living in this small Oregon town for five years and had slowly made many friends. We had put on several plays, and Kris had been the president of the Musical Arts Council that Andy Loney had started. We were well known in the community, and I think well liked.

Our best friends were a Swedish couple, Karin and Rolf, with whom we could feel free to speak our true opinions without being afraid of reprisals. Another truly fine couple, Maja and Gary, did everything they could to make us feel welcome and appreciated. They had three girls, and at one time or another Kris tried to teach all of them to play the violin, but it never took. I think they took lessons because their mother wanted them to learn to play and they hated to disappoint her.

As I mentioned before, Kris and Maja became such good friends that they talked on the telephone every day, sometimes for hours. When I asked what they had to talk about all that time, Kris answered that they talked about the children, but also about literature, religion and philosophy. The only time their telephone conversations bothered me was when I tried to call home to give a message to Kris and the line was busy. Otherwise I thought it was good for him to have something to occupy his time, for work was still sparse.

Maja and I also became very good friends, although at times I felt her opinions were too absolute in things she didn't understand. We discussed Feuchtwanger's "Jew Suss," and she stated that it was not good literature. She was surprised that I, who should know something about literature, thought it was such a tremendous book. At that point I stopped discussing with her. Had I said that Feuchtwanger was considered one of the best writers of his time, she would have been offended, for she was very sensitive and insecure.

The day had come for us to go through the examination for our citizenship papers. We had only time to study the Constitution a few days, but we were convinced we would be able to answer the questions. Before we came that far, however, I thought the sky was falling again.

Maja was going to be our witness and a little before one o'clock she came to pick us up. It was snowing, she was wearing boots and began taking off her boots outside. Kris came up to her and said:

"No, no, don't do that. I have fixed up a place inside for that."

She took them off outside anyway. Kris laughed and took them inside. Maja turned around and said in a strained voice:

"Did I do anything wrong?"

Kris and I looked at each other and didn't know what to answer, and she asked again: "Did I do anything wrong?"

Kris answered in a tired voice: "Of course not, I just wanted to keep your boots warm for you, but I should have known better, I shouldn't have said anything."

Then started a long argument about who had made whom uncomfortable, and I said:

"I don't understand what the big deal is. Is this the level of our conversation?"

Maja was offended and continued the argument in the same way. Kris answered, and the argument went around in circles. At last Maja asked if we wanted her to leave. A strained silence fell over the room. I felt completely lost and went into the bedroom to cry. Maja stayed in the living-room and cried. After a while Kris and Maja hugged and made up. I came out of the bedroom and said it was time to go. I was pretty disgusted with the whole affair.

Maja asked me to forgive her, which I did. But the incident had put a damper on my inner equilibrium. Here I was ready to become a citizen of a country where every word you said could be used against you. In Norway under the Occupation I had felt insecure, but at least there I knew who the enemy was. Now I felt more insecure than ever. Maja was a good friend. Why

would she be upset about an innocent situation at a time like this? It was an utterly confused women who went to the hearings to become an American Citizen.

The hearings went well. The Immigration Officer fired questions at us and we answered them all correctly. Maja was a confused witness. First she couldn't remember the year she met us. Then she tried to figure it out by the time her last baby was born, but couldn't remember the year that was. Then she tried to figure out how old her baby was now, and how old she was when she met us. As if that weren't enough, she couldn't remember the number of her house. By that time the examiner understood that she had a hard time with numbers and said casually, "We don't keep track of the dates with our friends, do we?"

When I tried to repeat the story to Gary, I must not have told it very well, because he only laughed politely. I don't think he understood a word of my explanation. Maybe it wasn't funny. The two of them gave us a present, a silver sugar tong, and when I use it, I remember that day.

A month later we took the oath, on March 3, 1954. Jan went with us. We were all dressed in our best clothes. I can't say how I truly felt about that day. I believe I was mostly embarrassed, because I don't like ceremonies of any kind, and

this was a ceremony we had to get through. The whole town was out to wish us welcome, and that was nice. There were several speakers, including the Mayor, the school superintendent and the judge. The Girl Scouts were there, and the Boy Scouts, and music from the high school, flowers and flags for everybody. But something out of the ordinary happened, of course. It always does where we are involved. When we were called in front of the judge, the examiner had not had a chance to ask one important question, and he asked the judge if he could do it there and then. We left the room with the judge and the examiner. I knew it was only a routine question, but Kris was suspicious and on his guard and almost broke up the whole thing when he was asked if he belonged to the communist party. Instead of saying a simple no, he started a whole harangue that he wanted this thing cleared up right away, and if they wanted witnesses, he could produce them, and on the whole behaved like he had a bad conscience. Then the examiner, who didn't know what kind of organization NAACP was, asked why we had joined. We tried to explain to him, but to no avail. The judge looked embarrassed, but didn't interrupt. Well, Kris being Kris, making theater any time there is a chance, said with great bravado:

"I believe in equal rights for every human being, regardless of race, creed or religion, and this I will believe until I perish from this earth."

The judge broke up the meeting after that, and we went in line with the other would-be American citizens and took our oath. Then followed an extremely boring program for about an hour. After it was all over, the judge wanted to talk to us, the radio station wanted an interview with us, the Mayor and the superintendent wanted to congratulate us. Judge Vandenberg tried to explain that it was a routine question from the federal government the clerk had asked, but since he didn't belong to judge Vandenberg's court, he couldn't stop the questioning. He was obviously embarrassed over the situation, and talked and talked to make us feel better. We parted the best of friends.

Then the mayor wished us welcome to the country and especially to this community. He was so friendly that he did everything but embrace us. The radio station waited all this time to get an interview, and we both felt like Very Important People for a day.

Later Maja and Gary took us to dinner to an Italian restaurant, and this time when I told the story about the ceremony, I must have done it right, because everybody had a merry time.

Graduation

Summer 1955 had finally arrived, at the end of which Kris would graduate with a Bachelor Degree in Music. Jan and I had planned on going to Portland to see him graduate. The last two years I had paid on a gold watch I would give him, I had it engraved and ready to go.

I had been working at the wholesale grocery store for a year and a half, and felt secure in my job. It had been a little tense in the beginning. I hadn't been there more than a couple of days when the owner started to tell me about his travels, and how much he enjoyed them. Except when he went to Israel, he said, because Jews are Jews, and he didn't like them very much.

It was a awkward situation for me, but I knew I had to speak up and said: "Jews are no different than other people. I am a Jew. There are no different traits in me than in others."

He never touched the subject again, and I was glad I still had the job. It was a good place for me to work. I learned a lot and felt free to do my job the way I set it up. The boss was hardly ever there. His sister-in-law worked in the packing and shipping department, and she and I became good friends. But she was so adamantly prejudiced about blacks that she told me she

could never sit at the same table with a negro, she would never touch a negro, and she shuddered at the thought of having to eat something a negro had cooked.

I tried my best to change her mind, but she was not to be convinced that her whole attitude was wrong and out of date. The best I could do was to change her expression from nigger to negro. This was forty years ago, and I know there are lots of blacks in that town now. I wonder how she is getting along.

I had been in that place long enough to get a raise in salary, but nothing had been said about it, and one day I wrote a little note to my boss and asked for one. He never answered me. A few weeks later I asked him directly, but he didn't answer me. I wondered why he wouldn't either give me a yes or no, and I asked again. This time he answered:

"I understand that you are not happy here, so tomorrow I have another person coming in here to take over."

"You mean I am fired?" I could hardly believe what I heard.

"If you want to call it that, yes," he said.

I was totally unprepared for that outcome. I thought he liked me because I was dependable, and I know he liked my work. I talked to his sister-in-law and she said:

"He is a cheap-skate, I have worked here for five years and I have never had a raise. I make 2 dollars an hour."

I was afraid. Kris was in Portland, Jan and I had tickets to leave in two days. I certainly didn't want to ruin Kris' graduation by telling him I was fired. That evening two artist friends, Ron and Dick, came over, and I told them my predicament. Dick said:

"Let's celebrate. Let's go out and eat. Something else will come up that will be better for you. We don't want to sit around and mope."

We went out and had a merry time, laughed and joked and acted like there wasn't a worry in the world. I will never forget Dick for making a serious situation so lighthearted that I forgot to be afraid of tomorrow.

Dick's predictions held true. The next morning on the bus I started a conversation with a lady I had seen there before but never talked to. She told me I looked worried. I told her I had been fired.

"What kind of work do you do?" she asked.

"I am a bookkeeper."

"In the store I work, we need a bookkeeper. Our bookkeeper quit, and they have had a hard time getting another one."

When I inquired more about the store, it turned out to be the bookstore on Main street where I had been a frequent customer, and that pleased me. If I no longer wrote books, working in a bookstore would almost be the next best thing. In my lunch hour I went there and asked for the job. I told the owner the truth why I had been fired. He gave me the job. We settled on the salary, and what I could expect in the future. I would no longer have to ask for a raise in salary. I stayed in that job for the rest of our stay in Oregon.

Jan and I went to Portland for Kris' graduation. It was a big moment in our lives. Kris had been promised a full time job from the fall, and for the first time since we came emigrated, we would start to live like ordinary people with regular incomes.

THE REST OF OUR LIVES

We stayed in Oregon until Jan was sixteen years old. When he started to suggest that he needed more competition, we looked for opportunities in California around San Francisco. Kris got a job in Mt. Diablo Unified School District and I got a job at the University of California, Berkeley, right when the demonstrations for the Free Speech Movement started, and in the department that was very much in the forefront. We stayed in California over twenty eventful years. After one year of college, Jan was tired of school and went in to Vista for one year. After that he went East to the New England Conservatory of Music for five years. While still in school he got a job in St. Louis Symphony, but the administration let him finish school before he had to report for work. He is still a member of the Symphony. When we were ready to retire, he asked us to move to St. Louis. We again pulled up roots and moved, we hope for the last time. We have lived here now since 1983 during more stimulating and dramatic occurrences.

CICA

I cannot explain why Cica is so much on my mind. I saw her a few times over the years. She married an Israeli and settled down in Princeton where her husband worked at the University. They had a son, David. I think I identified her with my family as my sister.

We visited Cica and her family in Princeton on our way to Norway in 1958. She was glad to hear that we moved from the housing project and had a house of our own this time. We never had enough time together to talk intimately about our feelings, our ideas, our expectations of life, our beliefs or lack of them, our lives. We talked about everyday things and looked at each other and smiled.

We corresponded faithfully for years. We also kept in touch with Roszi by exchanging holiday greetings. Then Cica stopped writing. I sent several letters, but had no answers. I faithfully sent greeting to her through Roszi, but had no answer from any of them.

Many years later Roszi, then a widow, came to visit us in California. She told us that Cica was slowly going blind as a result of her concentration camp days. She was very depressed and wanted no contact with anybody, not even her mother.

David was in college, and she no longer lived in Princeton. Her husband wasn't mentioned.

Roszi was a product of her time, which was one of pretensions where not much was said about troubles in the family. I was also brought up where pretensions were prevalent, but had shed most of the pretensions. But I was still reluctant to pry into other people's affairs. I didn't feel free to ask questions about things that hadn't been brought up. All the unsaid things remained unsaid. We knew Roszi had died when my letters kept coming back.

I want to know about Cica, and I thought maybe if David saw this story he could tell me what happened. I have forgotten the last name and can't look him up. Stranger things have happened as you will see when you read my epilogue.

BROCKEN

I have characterized Brocken as the second half of my destiny, and feel that I cannot end this book and let him fade away without explanations. He wasn't actually a part of my life after we moved to Oregon, but he shaped my thinking and sharpened my awareness forever. We kept on corresponding for over forty years, in the beginning at least once a week, then once or twice a month, and in the later years maybe only three or four times a year. He never missed my birthday, and sent the most sentimental cards. I looked forward to those cards and remembered his words from my youth when I was annoyed with his generous compliments: "The day will come when you will appreciate those compliments and wish they were still coming."

He was right. I missed having someone like him to talk to. I still do. I missed his attention. I had little coming my way. Jan and Kris took it all. The only attention I got was from my three correspondents. They kept me writing, and for that I am grateful.

Up to the last years of his life, I thought Brocken would make a breakthrough from his passive lifestyle and finish one of the many books he was working on. Kris was more realistic and said it would never happen. Brocken would write a book on one subject and say he had only a little more research to do before

he published, but somehow that research was never done. He would start on another subject and say the same thing. His ideas were excellent and something people would have wanted to read. I don't really know much about his life after we were separated. We didn't see each other more than maybe four or five times during those years. And every time we saw him, it was under unfavorable circumstances. Brocken never had any money.

A few times he asked us for money, and we sent it whether we had any or not. Sometimes we had to borrow the money we sent him and either telegraph it or send it by postal check, because he needed it right away. He always had the same excuse: he was expecting an honorarium and promised to send the money back the following week. He never did, and I knew he wouldn't because he couldn't. He must have struggled profusely to keep himself with roof over his head and food in his mouth. The last time I saw him he looked thin and undernourished, but he said it was because he had become a vegetarian. We wanted to buy him dinner, but he ordered only apple pie and coffee.

Brocken didn't become an American citizen, nor did he ever go back to Norway. He sent articles to *Dagbladet* in Norway, and transferred money from Norway when that became possible. He also did research for Rexall Drug Company about primitive people's uses of plants and roots to treat certain ailments. But he never made enough money to file an income tax return. I

believe he was living under the poverty line most of his life. I don't think he ever went on welfare. He would have been too proud to do that.

To this day I don't understand why Brocken didn't go back to Norway. When he saw that he couldn't be successful here, that his ideas could never be put into reality without proper financing, he could have gone back. In Norway he would have had no trouble making a living. He could teach at the university, he could write articles, he could have gotten grants. He could even have made it as an artist. His paintings were not great, but they were good. When I think of all that unused talent, it makes me angry the way Brocken wasted it.

When he finally came into his inheritance, his living arrangements didn't change. He never told me he had received his inheritance. I heard that from his relative in Norway after his death, when there was a question about having his remains sent back to Norway to be buried in the family plot. She couldn't understand how his huge fortune had disappeared so fast. There was just enough for getting him home and for upkeep of his grave.

In his last letter he had told me that he was still keeping up his philanthropic activities. He was helping refugees from South America with papers so that they could stay in this country. And he was also helping people in the last stages of

AID's to find a place to live. I think I know where all his money went.

He had no friends but us. The person who called me to tell that Brocken was in a nursing home was the caretaker of the building in which he had his apartment. He told me that Brocken had slipped in the bathroom and broken both his legs. He didn't think he would ever be able to take care of himself again. "After all, he is 85 years old," he stated.

I got the telephone number of his nursing home and called him. I heard him say: "Telephone for me? From St. Louis? If it is from St. Louis, it can only be Elsa." He answered the telephone. I hadn't talked to him on the telephone since we were in Sweden. He never had a telephone in America which made it impossible for me to call him. He wanted it that way, he said. He disliked telephones.

His voice hadn't changed at all. It sounded as vibrant and full of life as before. He didn't stutter. I asked if he wanted me to come and visit him, but he told me to wait until he was out of the nursing home and had his own apartment again. I knew that would never happen, but didn't pursue the subject. He obviously didn't want me to see him under those dismal circumstances, and I felt he must be allowed to keep his dignity to the end.

Two days later the caretaker called to tell me he had died and asked what he should do with Brocken's papers. I told him I would take care of them. I called the Norwegian Legation and told them about him, and asked that his remains be sent back to Norway and his papers to the University of Oslo. The caretaker sent the papers from the nursing home to me when I told him I would pay for the postage. I went through the papers to see if there were any that should be turned over for posterity, but there were mostly letters from his desperate try to get a pension from Norway. He had finally succeeded in that, so I destroyed the papers.

My brother Rolle, my sister-in-law Nusse and Brocken's relative were the only people at the funeral. I am sad when I think of this genius ending his life under such sad circumstances. Kris and I had been afraid to come to America by ourselves. We had thought we couldn't make it without Brocken. How wrong we were. Without much education behind us, without connections, and without Brocken's abilities, we had made out all right. He, on the other hand, had wasted most of the last 45 years doing nothing of importance. I commend him for doing what he did the last few years of his life when he finally had some money, but I do not commend him for all his wasted years.

When I think of him my feelings are mixed with sadness for him and gratitude for me. I wish he could have benefited from his friendship with me as I had from my friendship with him. But it was too late for him. He had already achieved more than most people do in a lifetime. I was in a better situation. I had achieved very little and had nothing to live up to.

EPILOGUE

In April 1995 I received a book from Norway with the story of the night all the Jewish men and women were transported by the ship *Donau* to the dreaded *Auschwitz*. The book also gave the dates of the death of every Norwegian Jew on that ship. One little piece of information from that book was for me so dramatic that I had to write the author, Kristian Ottosen, about it. I include part of the letter:

"Here I sit, in another part of the world, on another continent, fifty-three years later and read about something I have not been able to put to rest in my mind, the times my father and two brothers perished in *Auschwitz*. My only living brother, Rolle Dickman, who survived Berg Concentration Camp, lives in Oslo. I have lived in America since 1946. When he and I meet, we seldom talk about the fate of the rest of the family. He cannot bear to recall the atrocities, and news and books from Norway have disappeared in the array of publications produced here. I thank you for the thorough research preceding the writing of your book, and for the fact that I now can put to rest that part of my life. Not knowing is always more difficult than knowing. I am not religious, but now I can take part in one of the nicest Jewish traditions, that of burning a light on the days of my father's and my brothers' death 'In Memory'.

I also discovered when Eva Jaffe from Tønsberg died, which was the same day as my father. It was the day the prisoners reached Auschwitz. Eva was a friend of my youngest brother, Sigurd Dickman, and I remember the day she called at my home and asked me to go with her to Tønsberg. She had called her mother and heard that her father and all her brothers had been arrested. I had already been at Bredtvedt that morning and gathered information that all the Jewish men had been transported to Berg Concentration Camp in Tønsberg. I was ready to go there when she came.

It was fortunate that I didn't take the trip alone. I would never have been able to find the camp by myself. But Eva was born and raised in Tønsberg and knew where the camp was. The train to Tønsberg normally takes a couple of hours. This time it took over four hours, and German soldiers were coming and going constantly. We didn't dare to look at each other or talk the whole time."

I then told the author of the night Eva and I spoke to the guard at Berg and finally talked him into delivering some food and clothing to the prisoners, and how he brought back all the messages from the prisoners. And how I had in the dark of the night delivered those messages to the prisoners' families. That story is in the first part of my book. Again I quote from my letter.

"And now I come to the nucleus of this letter. I quote from your book, page 27: 'The next morning something unexpected happened. In the mailbox she found a pencil-written post card. It was from Håkon. He was now at Berg Concentration Camp close to Tønsberg. It seemed like the card was written in a hurry. Besides telling how much he missed her and Dan, he asked her to send him a few necessities.'

I can't be positive that this was one of the notes I delivered that night I came back from Tønsberg. But everything points in that direction. When I read that section, the drama in the situation hit me and my whole body froze. I vividly remembered the night I read the names and addresses on those pieces of papers and systematically put them in the mailboxes where they belonged. I didn't dare to do it openly; I was afraid enough to do it in secret. Can you understand my joy when it turned out that at least one family had reaped some comfort from my effort? I knew what it meant for me to hear from my family."

Finally, after fifty-three years, my story had come to a full circle.

"And now I come to the question of this letter. I quote from your book, page 17: 'The next morning something unexpected happened. In the hallway she found a pencil-written post card. It was from Nelson. He was now at Berg Concentration Camp close to Weisberg. It seemed like the card was written in a hurry. Besides telling how much he missed her and Dan, he asked her to send him a few necessities.'"

I can't be positive that this was one of the notes I delivered that night I came back from Weisberg. But everything points in that direction. When I read that section, the stress in the attention hit me and my whole body froze. I vividly remembered the night I read the card and addressed on those pieces of paper and systematically put them in the hallways where they belonged. I didn't dare to do it openly; I was afraid enough to do it in secret. Can you understand my joy when it turned out that at least one family had reached some comfort from my efforts? I know what it meant for me to hear from my family."

Finally, after fifty-three years, my story had come to a full circle.